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THURSDAY JANUARY 18 1996

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Tory grandees 'preparing plot to depose Major'

By Nicholas Wood
Chief Political Correspondent

SENIOR Conservative MPs believe that a group of Tory grandees is plotting to oust John Major after the May council elections.

They have told *The Times* that the group includes leading figures previously regarded as loyal to the Prime Minister.

Many MPs and ministers, increasingly despairing of the Government's chances of overhauling

Labour's big lead in the opinion polls, say that the Prime Minister's leadership will come under renewed pressure after heavy losses in the May poll. But the claims that Mr Major is losing the confidence of prominent figures who rallied to his side in last summer's leadership election suggest that the scale of the threat to him is more serious than many Tories have supposed.

Mr Major's backers, who remain numerous, will dismiss the claims, which are being advanced by figures on the Right and the Left of

the party, as no more than a dirty tricks operation by disaffected MPs unable to come to terms with the Prime Minister's victory over John Redwood.

Ministers genuinely loyal to the Prime Minister are adamant that he will fight off any attempt to unseat him. But the fact that rumours of a high-level conspiracy are circulating at Westminster is a further indication that his position has been weakened by the turmoil of the last few weeks, which have seen the defection of Emma Nicholson to the Liberal Democrats and

Baroness Thatcher's demand for a return to right-wing policies.

It appears that senior Tories apparently loyal to Mr Major have been considering an attempt to replace him for some time. *The Times* has been told that as long ago as last summer loyal backbenchers were taking discreet soundings among colleagues. Some leading figures in the Lords are rumoured to be involved in the current moves.

Some MPs believe that the

reason Mr Major called the snap leadership election early last July was because he became aware that he was the target of wider dissatisfaction than that voiced by his Euro-sceptic critics.

It is also being suggested that the plot has been reactivated in recent weeks out of despair at the Government's continued dismal poll ratings, the rebirth of the Centre-Left after last summer's Cabinet reshuffle and anger over the Prime Minister's handling of the Nolan report, which requires MPs to

declare their earnings from parliamentary consultancies. One MP who claimed to be aware that something was afoot said: "These people are motivated by one thing alone — power. They believe that the Conservative Party has a divine right to rule and they don't want to pay the higher taxes that would come with a Labour government."

Known dissidents on the Right and the Left have been speculating about a "bloodless coup" in which the leadership is smoothly transferred to Michael Heseltine with-

out the bruising spectacle of a leadership contest. But close friends of Mr Redwood last night discounted such a possibility.

Mr Major was given a boost yesterday as Sir Richard Body, one of the "whipless" Tory rebels, returned to the fold. His Commons majority officially rises to five, although it would drop to three again if the Tories lose the two pending by-elections.

Rebel returns, page 10

Palace refuses to settle £1m debts

The Queen will not bail out Duchess

By Emma Wilkins and Anne Ashworth

THE QUEEN is refusing to help the Duchess of York with debts of more than £1 million, Buckingham Palace said yesterday.

The Duchess, whose prolific spending far outpaces her income, is being told to face up to her financial responsibilities alone. The Duchess's office said yesterday that she was quite aware of the Queen's decision and that she was making huge economies. It is legally possible that she could be bankrupted, since she has few assets, but it is unlikely.

As the scale of her problems — including interest charges of up to £90,000 a year — became clear, royal officials pointed to the Queen's substantial provision for her daughter-in-law. She received a £2 million settlement when she separated from her husband four years ago, securing two daughters' futures and giving her a generous income to rent a home.

In a highly unusual move yesterday, the Palace made clear that the Queen was not prepared to intervene any further. "The Duchess's business ventures are conducted quite separately from any royal duties, and any transactions resulting from them must be resolved between the Duchess and her business associates and creditors. They are not a matter for the Queen," a spokesman said.

"The Queen has made generous provisions to the Duchess over a number of years and reached a private agreement in 1992."

"Since her separation, the Duchess has carried out no official royal duties and therefore whatever business difficulties she has got into are a matter for her, her bankers and advisors to sort out. It's not up to the Queen."

This could prove an expensive year for the Queen. She may have to contribute to a divorce settlement for the Princess of Wales and if Prince Edward were to become engaged to Sophie Rhys-Jones, the Queen would probably buy the couple a house.



The Duchess will have to deal with creditors

The Duchess's problems stem from her failure to make the fortune she hoped for from her *Budgie* books, while continuing to lead a lavish life-style punctuated by frequent trips overseas.

Redecorating Kingsbourne — the Victorian mansion in Wentworth, Surrey, that she rents for £6,000 a month — is estimated to have cost tens of thousands of pounds, and the wages bill for her staff of cook, dresser, butler, nanny, chauffeur and a clutch of personal assistants is estimated at £32,000 a month.

She has now embarked on a cost-cutting exercise, including reducing her staff and abandoning her new year skiing holiday at Klosters. Her press secretary, Dominique Valliamy, left this week along with her assistant, Simone Canetty-Clarke, and will not be replaced.

Ms Valliamy denied yesterday that she had left after arguing with the Duchess, but said it would be inappropriate to comment further. Kate Waddington, another member of the Duchess's staff, said: "The reason that Dominique and her assistant went is because of financial cutbacks. There used to be five of us in

the office, but now there are just three."

Ms Waddington said the Duchess would not comment on her financial affairs. "It's a private matter and nothing more is going to be said" — although she admitted last year that she was in trouble.

In a recent interview, the Duchess said that she intended to spend more time generating income. "I have decided to concentrate on my commercial activities and cut back momentarily my trips for charity. I have to work to earn my living, to be able to provide my daughters with a pleasant upbringing," she said.

She has also insisted that she is making huge cutbacks and that she is scrupulous in separating her charity money and private finances. "Nobody can say that I use any of my charity money for personal use because it would simply not be true. You know the truth is I always pay my way."

The Duchess is said to have her overdraft with Coutts. The bank does not discuss individual accounts, but it said that a customer with a large loan would probably be charged an arrangement fee plus interest at 2 or 2.5 points over the base rate of 6.5 per cent.

All customers with less than £3,000 in their accounts pay bank charges of 75p per statement entry, plus a £45 quarterly management fee.

Assuming that a customer made a hundred transactions each month — a reasonable number for a freespending globetrotter — and an interest rate of 9 per cent, the annual charge for a £1 million overdraft would be about £91,080.

An ordinary mortal with a high street current account would not be allowed to run up such a debt. But if it were permitted, it would be more expensive. For authorised overdrafts, Barclays charges 1.5 per cent per month, plus a £5 monthly charge. That would mean £180,000 a year.

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Elizabeth's story, page 15
Diary, page 18



A pall of smoke hangs over the City as fire rages on top of the 600 ft tower

Fire hits NatWest Tower

By Carol Midgley and Dominic Kennedy

ONE of the City of London's most famous landmarks, the NatWest Tower, was ravaged by fire yesterday as workers were repairing damage caused by an IRA bomb in 1993.

The blaze on the top of the 45-storey tower sent dense black smoke across the skyline above the financial heart of the capital as 500 workmen in hard hats rushed down fire escapes to evacuate the 600 ft

vacant office block. Experts began their investigation last night into what is likely to be one of the most expensive blazes of recent years.

There were no injuries. Roads in the area were blocked and firefighters were aided by a high-tech airborne infra-red camera that has just started operation on a trial basis. The "spy in the sky" camera picks up heat waves coming from fires and trans-

forms them into pictures.

The NatWest Tower had been devastated by the Bishopsgate bomb which killed one person on April 24, 1993. When the tower opened in 1980, it was Europe's tallest building, having cost £72 million and nine years to complete. It was overtaken in height by Canary Wharf in London's Docklands.

Estimates for the repairs after the bombing were £50m.

Oil giants cut more than 4p off petrol prices

By Jonathan Prynn
Transport Correspondent

A DISCOUNT war broke out between Britain's largest petrol retailers yesterday when Shell slashed up to 4.4p a litre off its prices from midnight last night at all 2,000 of its garages.

The move came the day after Esso, the market leader with 2,100 forecourts, announced it was scrapping its 10-year-old "Tiger tokens" gift promotion in favour of lower pump

prices throughout the country. Previously, Esso had concentrated its price reductions in the North East of England and central Scotland. Its new pledge promising pump prices "among the lowest available" and "normally unbeatable" is likely to result in cuts of at least 3p a litre.

David Pirret, general manager of Shell UK's retail division, said: "We have competed vigorously in a regional price war for around six months and are now offering lower prices to the

rest of the country." Yesterday's reductions means that a litre of Shell Advanced 4 Star falls from 63.9p to 59.5p while a litre of Shell Advanced Unleaded will fall from 58.9p to 56.9p.

None of the other leading petrol retailers announced price cuts of their own, but industry experts said it was only a matter of time before they followed suit.

Shell and BP said they would be keeping their service station gift

The latest round of discounting comes in response to aggressive competition from the major supermarket chains, which have taken around 23 per cent of the petrol retail market by selling it as a "loss leader" for their stores.

"We welcome this move by the petrol companies in following the lead we have set," said Tom Vyner, deputy chairman of Sainsbury's. "Our commitment is to offer the best possible

Continued on page 2, col 4

Terrorists set to end hijack of Black Sea ferry

From Thomas de Waal in Moscow and Carlotta Gall outside Pervomaiskoye

THE TURKISH Government and pro-Chechen commandos who have hijacked a Black Sea ferry agreed in principle last night to end the crisis peacefully.

But other Chechens were holding out with hostages for the third day running in the village of Pervomaiskoye in southern Russia despite salvos of Grad rockets, artillery bombardment and attacks by helicopter gunships. The head of Turkish intelligence said the ferry hijackers could reach Istanbul safely and surrender after holding a news conference — a deal to which the commando leader agreed, according to the semi-official news agency Anatolia.

The gunmen, who are holding about 200 hostages, had earlier given warning that a rescue attempt would force them to blow up the ship, blocking the Bosphorus Strait.

"We've all got 10lb of explosives strapped to our chests," one hijacker told Reuters by telephone from the Turkish vessel in the Black Sea as it was shadowed through 20ft waves by two Turkish coast-guard ships. "That's enough to blow up both us and the whole boat," said the gunman, who

gave his name as Abrek.

Tokcan, the hijackers' leader, claimed in a telephone call to Anatolia that explosives had been placed under lorries and fuel depots. He also said they had 50 friends on board, many carrying guns.

The Turkish Interior Minister, Teoman Unusan, said Tokcan was from Düzce, in northern Turkey, and had fought with Chechen rebels seeking to breakaway from Russia.

The hostage-takers said they had no argument with the Turkish Government and would free Turks on the 3,838-tonne *Avrasya*. Tokcan added: "This is a warning to Yeltsin."

"It is a very sensitive incident," President Demirel of Turkey said. "No such thing happened to us before. There were plane hijackings but a ship hijacking never happened to us before."

At its present rate, the ferry could reach Istanbul by late today or early tomorrow, depending on the weather. Ali Caner, a Turkish passenger, told the television station they were being treated well.

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Revealed! Blair's oh so simple stakeholder masterplan

The secret is out. Labour's plans for Britain are clear at last. Now we know what Tony Blair meant in Singapore by "stakeholder" Britain. Details were revealed to MPs yesterday by Margaret Beckett, chief opposition spokesman on trade and industry.

Under Labour there will be "a great, united, national effort", she said. And that was all she said. The plan is devastatingly simple.

Mrs Beckett's announcement was received in some-

thing close to shock at the audacity of the strategy. But of course, like all strokes of genius, once explained it seemed so obvious. Why had nobody thought of this before? For 15 years the Tories have been gassing on about deregulation, privatisation and the like, while "old" Labour has been advocating State control. Thrusting both aside, Mr Blair and his team have cut the Gordian knot.

Mrs Beckett was responding to Ian Lang, the Industry Secretary, in an exchange

about Britain's trade balance. How could this be improved? By a great, united, national effort, Mrs Beckett said. After this insight, it was a wonder anybody bothered to stay.

But we did, to hear James Pawsley (C, Rugby and Kenilworth) ask about an exotic new element in European thinking he called "the Seychelles chapter". Either they are even posher in Rugby and Kenilworth than we had imagined, or EU enlargement proceeds alarmingly.

As Pawsley spoke, Ian Lang

gazed round from the front bench in apparent rapture. Tory backbenchers, now in your hour! Terrified of further defections, government whips have ordered frontbenchers to sweet-talk even the sourest old lags behind them, though Pawsley does not look particularly sour.

David Congdon (C, Croy-

don NE), a man with the aspect of a crematorium janitor, found his thoughts on Labour's policy failures received by ministers as might be a lecture from Wittgenstein. The youthful Nigel Evans (C, Ribbles Valley), ever ready with an apple for the teacher, found Mr Lang ready with a basketful of peaches.



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

An astonished Sir Michael Grylls (C, Surrey NW), who had chanced a mild observation or two to Richard Page, a junior minister, was greeted with the news that "I have always listened to you with reverence and affection". We do think this was going a bit far. The day Sir Michael abandons the Party of Capitalism we may expect the Pope to denounce St Peter.

But ministers went further. Teresa Gorman rose (well, took off) with some familiar protests about Brussels direc-

tives, her drift being that these should just be ignored. "I do have a lot of sympathy," crooned another junior minister, Phillip Oppenheim, "with that. I think my hon friend makes some fair points there."

Was this necessary? It is hard to imagine where Mrs Gorman could defect to, except Outer Space. When Nicholas Budgen (C, Wolverhampton SW), who was being beastly as usual, heard Mr Oppenheim "reciprocate my hon friend's warm congratulations with the same

warmth" he must have wondered whether flattery could be pushed further. It was, Oppenheim congratulated him on his sporting credentials.

Only Michael Fabricant (C, Mid Staffordshire) missed the new mood. Thanking Ian Taylor for his answer, Fabricant told the minister he had found it "long, detailed and helpful". Poor child. He thinks backbenchers are still supposed to flatter ministers, rather than the other way round.

Give all workers a stake in their firm, says Labour

BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND JILL SHERMAN

THE Labour leadership will today call on employers to allow all staff to own shares in their companies. It will pledge that a Labour Government will find ways of encouraging more firms to give shopfloor workers the same rights to shares as senior executives.

The party aims to remove administrative barriers to share option schemes and to sweep away the cultural obstacles to the idea of lower-paid workers being given the chance of owning a part of their firms.

Support for "shares for all" is the latest example of a dramatic shift in economic attitudes. Only a few years ago the prevailing party attitude to shares was one of suspicion.

Labour, which is taking advice from City experts and companies running share ownership schemes, will look at whether existing tax incentives are being used efficiently. But sources emphasise there is no "pot of gold" from which new tax concessions can suddenly be found.

The plans, to be heralded in a speech by Alistair Darling, Labour's City spokesman, coincide with a regional tour by Tony Blair to sell his vision of the "stakeholder economy". They are seen by Mr Blair as an important and symbolic part of his stakeholder concept.

That concept came under further attack from the Tories yesterday after John Monks, general secretary of the TUC,

said in *The Times* that it would help the unions to rebuild their influence. His claim, that it was the means by which individual members could collectively make their voices heard and realise their "stakes" in society, was seized on eagerly by Conservatives, as was a call yesterday from John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB, for new laws on employees' rights.

Mr Edmonds told BBC Radio's *The World at One*: "People in Britain have fewer rights to information, they have less right to know what is going on in their company, they are more insecure at work and more easily sacked. Now some of those have to be put right by legislation."

"We already take many cases of individuals to indus-



Darling says plans do not need legislation

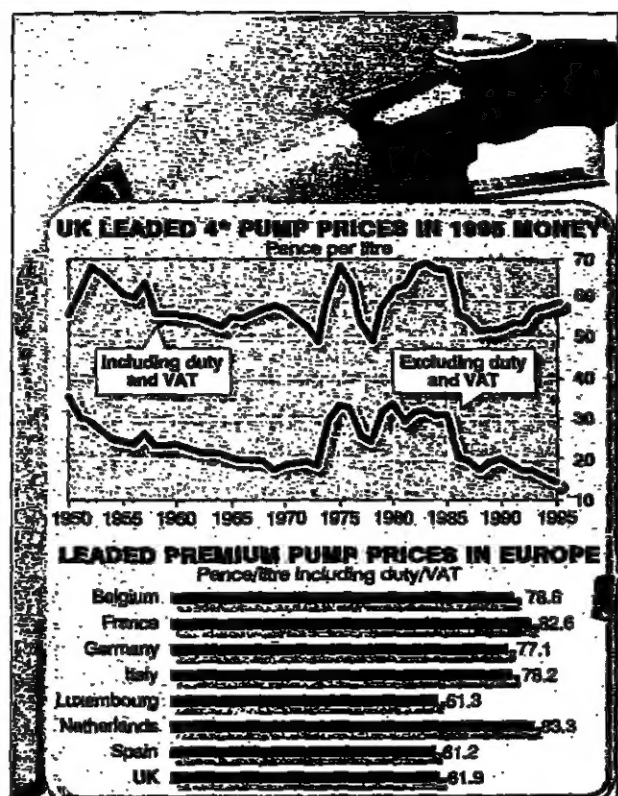
trial tribunals and I can see that as the rights in Britain are brought up to European standards, there will be even more need under a stakeholder economy for trade union support to ensure those rights are properly implemented."

Mr Darling insisted that the plans did not need new laws to make them work. He said: "All history shows, if you pass rules and regulations to try and force someone to change their culture, it doesn't work. You have to convince people that the only way they are going to succeed is firstly by ensuring that everybody who works for a company, from the boardroom to the shopfloor, feels involved in making that company successful."

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, attacked the Labour initiative as "empty flannel" that revealed nothing of policy for sustained economic prosperity. "It is waffle."

Adair Turner, Director-General of the CBI, said there was no need for trade union laws. "We are wary of new legislation. What has to happen is for businesses, sometimes working with trade unions, to be clear about the training and motivation that they need to give to workers to make sure they feel they have a real stake in the company."

Today Mr Darling will argue that shareholding should no longer be seen as an optional extra, or something unusual, but "as the norm in a dynamic economy".



Petrol prices cut by 4p

Continued from page 1

Leaded petrol costs about 8p a litre on the international oil markets compared with a retail price of about 13p before tax in Britain. The 5p difference has to cover the cost of transporting and selling the petrol and allow for a profit.

The price cuts were warmly welcomed by motoring organisations, which urged drivers to shop around for the best deals. The effect of a 3p per litre price cut would mean a fuel bill saving of about £36 a year for a motorist clocking up 8,000 miles and £54 for a driver averaging 12,000 miles, the AA said.

The British average before the latest price cuts of 61.9p for leaded premium petrol compares with 82.6p in France and 77.1p in Germany. Only Luxembourg was cheaper at 61.3p.

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Treasure seeker to get £141,000

BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A MAN who stumbled across a magnificent hoard of 126 Roman gold coins while learning to use a metal detector will receive £141,850 as a reward. The money will be shared with a farmer who rents the land where the coins were found and the owner of the field.

The figure, determined by the value of a find, was set by the independent Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee which met yesterday.

The coins, which include examples dating from the reign of the emperor Nero and span a period of about 100 years from AD 64, are described by the British Museum as one of the richest finds of Roman gold to have been made in this country.

They were unearthed in an Oxfordshire field by William Darley, 52, an iron moulder from Didcot, who had taken up the hobby only a month earlier. He said: "I'm really excited about how much it's made. I'll go on holiday with my wife. I'll also invest it. Of course the money is wonderful but what has delighted me more than anything is knowing I have found a little piece of history."

He recalled yesterday how he had asked the local farmer for permission to practise his new pastime in his field. "He laughed and said, 'If you find any gold coins, we'll split them 50-50'."

The British Museum is keen to acquire the collection, but must raise the £141,850. It expects to approach bodies such as the National Art Collections Fund for help.

Arms inquiry judge picked for new post

Sir Richard Scott, the judge chairing the arms-for-Iraq inquiry, has been chosen by the Lord Chancellor for the new post of head of civil justice. Sir Richard, 61, who is finalising his 2,000-page inquiry report, will undertake the job as well as his present post of Vice-Chancellor of the Supreme Court. His salary of £110,157 will not be increased.

The new post was recommended by Lord Woolf in his interim report on civil justice. The idea was to raise the status of the civil courts by appointing a senior judge to oversee reforms and co-ordinate practice in the High Court and county courts. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, said: "The Vice-Chancellor will be able to provide the leadership and authority required to carry forward the reforms which are required to improve the civil justice system."

Law Report, page 36

Poll backs assembly

Ulster Unionist hopes of setting up an elected assembly in Northern Ireland received an important boost yesterday when an opinion poll found that 70 per cent of people in the Province supported the proposal. As Sinn Féin reiterated its opposition to the plan at its first joint meeting with the British and Irish Governments, the Ulster Unionists heralded the poll as a vindication of their stance.

Prison chains removed

The Prison Service last night removed the chains from a woman inmate being treated for AIDS in a London hospital. The woman, aged 34, had been held on remand in Holloway jail accused of supplying heroin. The decision was made as the Home Office prepares for an imminent announcement which will outline an easing of the guidelines under which women prisoners are shackled while attending hospital.

Abduction charge

Andrew Poundley, 31, a disc jockey, was remanded in custody yesterday by magistrates at Oldham, Greater Manchester, charged with the abduction of Rosemary McCann, five, from her home. No application for bail was made during his three-minute appearance and reporting restrictions were not lifted. The girl was still missing last night despite extensive searches by police.

Body flown home

A private funeral will be held this weekend for Celine Figard, the French student who was raped, killed and dumped at a layby near Worcester. Her body, accompanied by her father Bernard, was flown home to France yesterday where the funeral is expected to take place on Saturday. She was last seen alive accepting a lift from a lorry driver at the Chelvey service station on the M4 in Berkshire.

West appeal hearing

A rare sitting of the full Court of Appeal is to decide in March whether Rosemary West should be granted leave to appeal against her ten murder convictions. The Lord Chancellor's Department said the decision was made because of the high degree of public interest. Lawyers acting for West, who is serving her life terms at Durham Jail, lodged her grounds for appeal last month.

Sacked woman wins

An accountant who was sacked after being diagnosed as having cancer while she was pregnant yesterday won her case for unfair dismissal. Richard Fulwell, Tee-Gee Snacks's finance director, told the tribunal that he was advised that Carol Coe, 30, of Hyde, Greater Manchester, had no right to return to work because she had been with the company for less than two years. Her award will be decided in March.

Cider claim settled

A mother of three who claims she suffered brain damage after drinking lead-polluted cider from a painted mug accepted £55,000 in an out-of-court settlement yesterday. Marian Bloom, 41, told the High Court the poisoning occurred during regular use of the mug at the Queen's Head in Stradbroke, Suffolk. Landlord Frederick Farrow and his wife Mary denied liability.

Police predict £12m bypass protest bill

BY TIM JONES

THE Chief Constable of Thames Valley said yesterday that the cost of policing the Newbury bypass protest over the next two years could reach £12 million and would affect police operations throughout the area. Charles Pollard has told David Maclean, a Home Office Minister, that, without extra government money, the force would face intolerable strains.

At a press conference Mr Pollard said: "Essentially, we are being asked to police from our force resources what is a national event. But there is a limit to the resources and manpower we have."

Mr Pollard added: "We estimate the additional burden for us over the two-year period could amount to £12 million, but that is maybe an underestimate. Police forces expect unusual events

to put a strain on their resources but Thames Valley and Hampshire are faced with the possibility of a conflict that could go on for more than two years, sucking in men and draining resources which otherwise would be used for normal policing."

Meanwhile, a huge increase in the number of security guards yesterday enabled contractors to complete their first full day's work since the battle of the Newbury bypass began ten days ago. Protected by more than 300 guards and scores of police, the chain saws buzzed all day on two sites as dozens of trees were felled.

More than 30 people were arrested and some protesters, who had been arrested earlier in the week, said they were ignoring bail conditions by revisiting the site.

Outcry over Maguire's cash award

BY JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MPs and terrorist victims spoke out yesterday against a £13,500 compensation award to a convicted bomber, Donna Maguire, for injuring her ankle when she tripped on a pavement.

David Wilshire, Tory MP for Spelthorne, called a Commons motion calling on the Government to end the "unfairness" of current compensation schemes and to ensure that convicted terrorists could not "financially exploit the state they were seeking to destroy".

The motion added: "While the ankle damage made it impossible for the convicted terrorist to wear high-heeled shoes and to dance, it did not prevent her attempting to murder five soldiers or act as an IRA spy on military installations."

Last night he pointed out that the parents of a child murdered in the Warrington bomb blast had been awarded

only £7,500, and victims with multiple injuries in the 1992 London Baltic Exchange explosion received £10,000.

Jacques Arnold, Tory MP for Gravesend, said: "A person who is agile enough to take part in various terrorist activities is about the last person to be compensated for this kind of thing. The money would have been better spent laying the paving stones."

Ms Maguire, 29, sued the Department of the Environment claiming she injured herself falling in Newry, Co Down, in 1985. In June last year she was convicted of the attempted murder of five soldiers at Quebec Barracks in Osnabruck, Germany, in 1989. She was released almost immediately as she had spent six years in custody awaiting trial.

Yesterday the parents of 12-year-old Tim Parry, killed by a 1992 bomb in Warrington, Cheshire, pointed out that she



Maguire won £13,500 for pavement trip

had received almost twice as much as her £7,500 compensation. Colin Parry said: "It is absolutely disgusting. It confirms my feeling that wrongdoers are better looked after than those who suffer the consequences."

Among the Baltic Exchange victims, ship broker Jeffrey

Blum, 42, who needed extensive brain surgery and whose right arm had to be rebuilt, refused to say how much he was awarded but said: "I am staggered. I think it is a nonsense. I do not think anyone should be barred from claiming if they have tripped and injured themselves. She is a human being irrespective of her political affiliations. But if some compensation is necessary, and that is a question in itself, why so much?"

A former taxi driver, Alan Ray, 38, has still received no compensation for a broken hand and multiple wounds to his arms, neck and head. He was off work for 14 months. Now a trainee train driver, he said: "I am disgusted. She complains she can't jog, but the IRA's victims can't dance or sing now."

Raymond Fayers, 47, a bank security guard, received £7,500 after his finger was left twisted by the City blast. He said: "What does it mean, she can't do a jig any more?"

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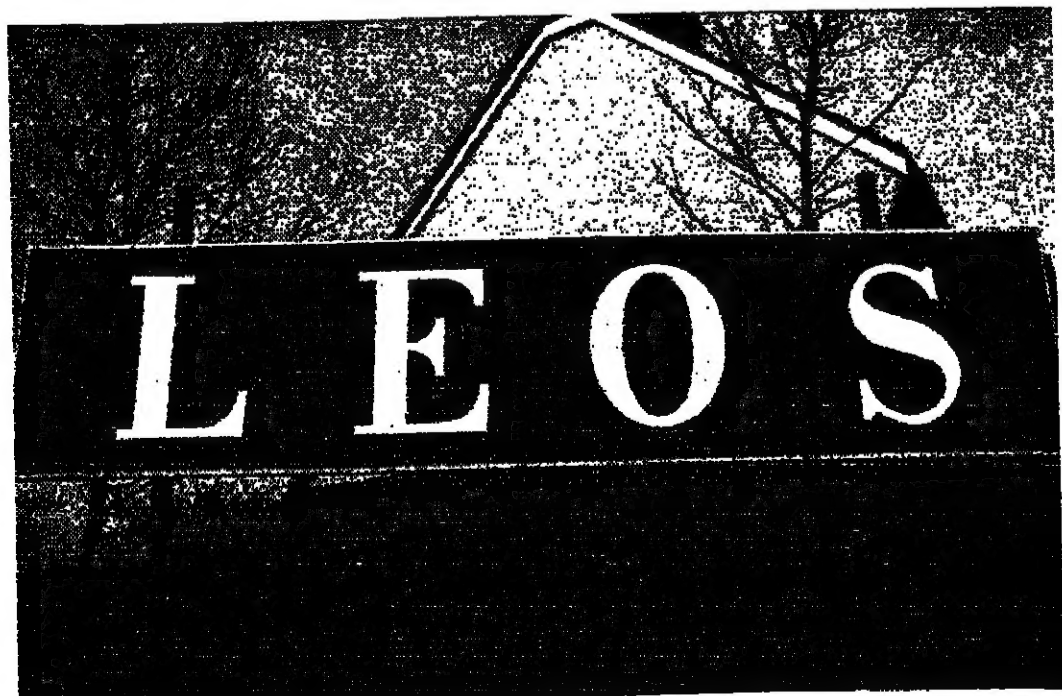
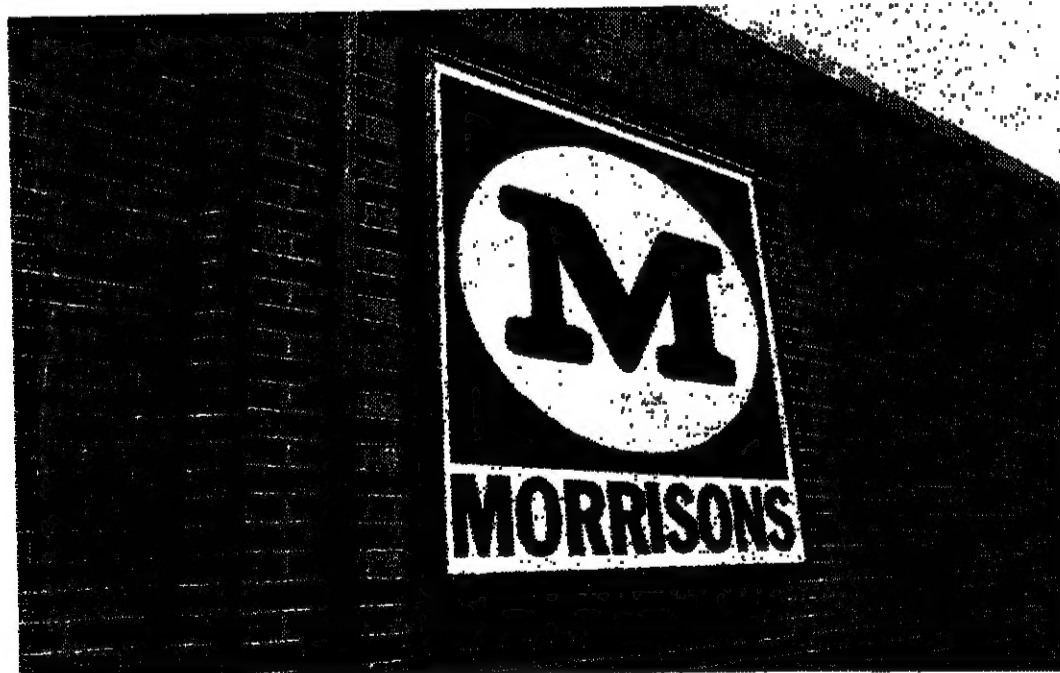
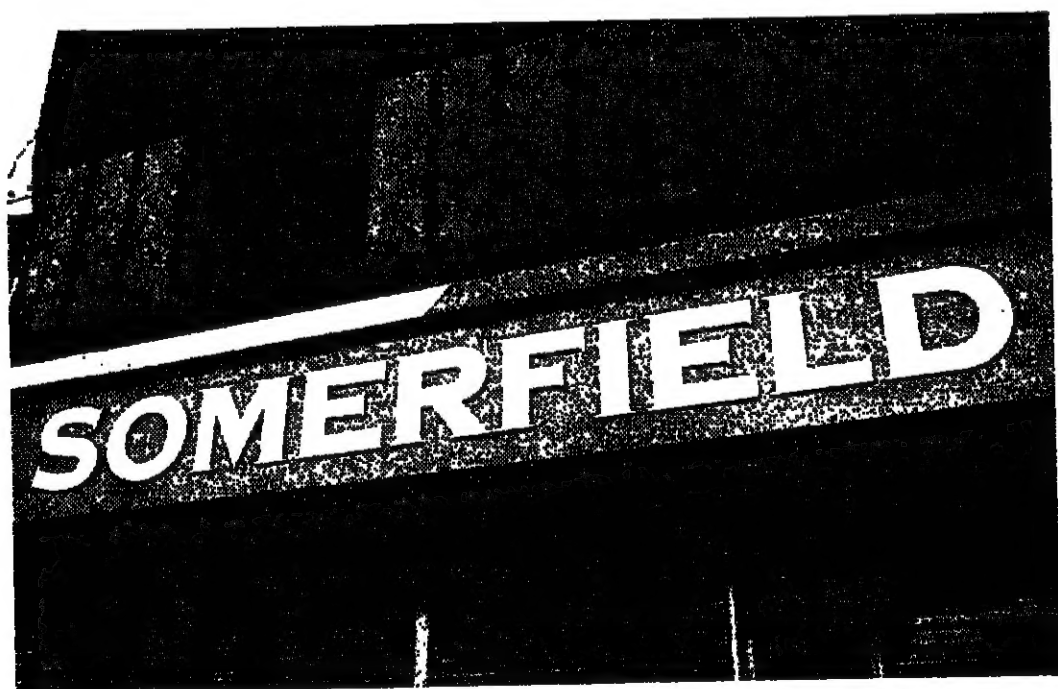
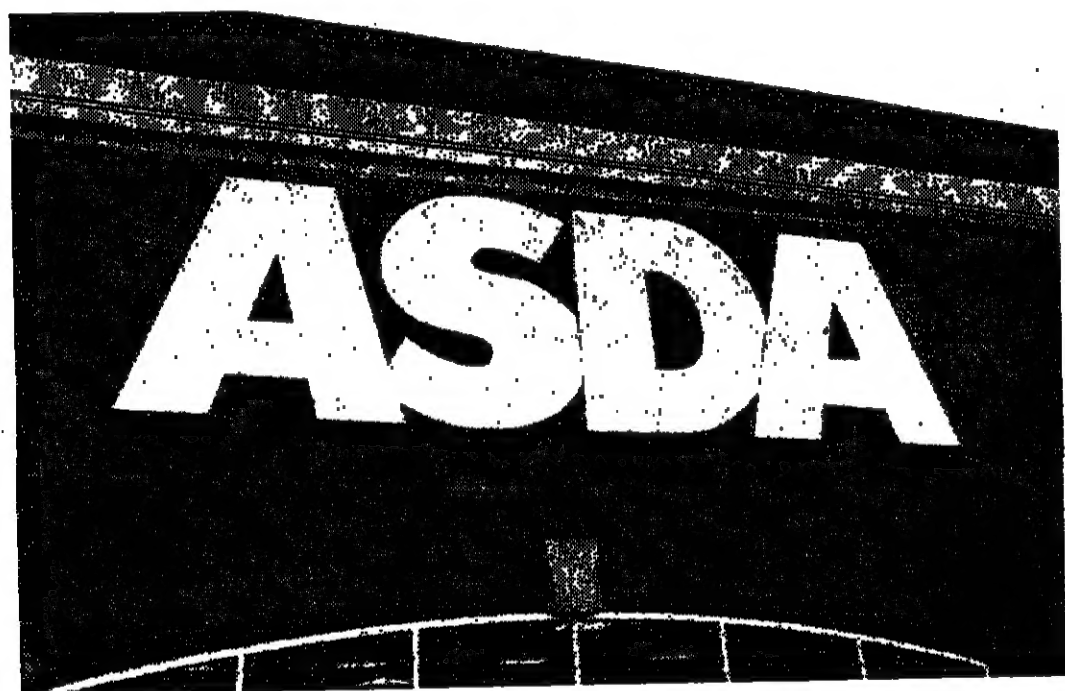
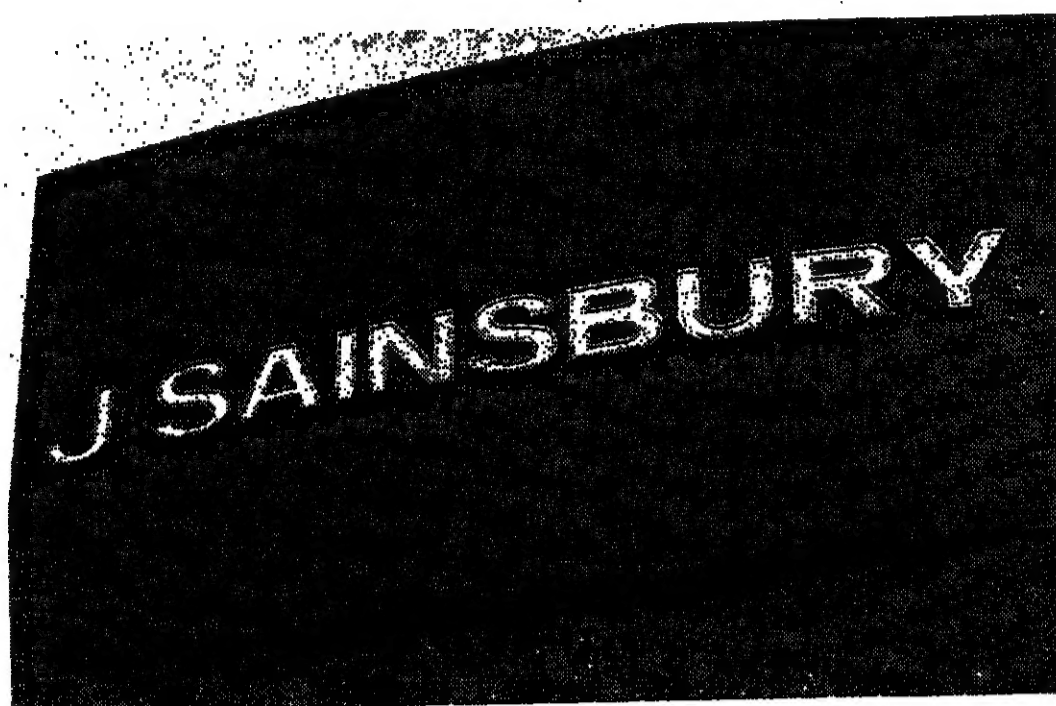
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Virgin contends rules were broken when Channel 5 television licence was awarded

Remark at party may delay new TV channel

By Alexandra Frean, Media Correspondent

AN OFF-THE-CUFF remark made at a children's party by the television executive Greg Dyke to a rival bidder for the Channel 5 television licence could scupper the launch of Britain's fifth terrestrial channel.

Virgin Television, part of Richard Branson's entertainment empire, yesterday launched a legal challenge in the High Court against the Independent Television Commission's decision last October to award the fifth channel licence to Channel 5 Broadcasting (CSB), a consortium led by Mr Dyke and Lord Hollick, the socialist millionaire.

Anthony Scrivener, QC, acting for Virgin Television, told Lord Justice Henry and Mr Justice Turner that Virgin — whose licence application was turned down on quality grounds — became suspicious about the way the licence was being awarded when Jeremy Fox, one of its executives, bumped into Mr Dyke at a children's party at Alexandra Palace in north London.

The event was held five months after the deadline for submitting Channel 5 bids.

"He [Mr Fox] was told by Mr Dyke that they had funded their application up to £200 million and had to put in

a further £100 million," Mr Scrivener said.

Lord Justice Henry pointed out that it was a "disputed conversation", but Mr Scrivener explained that he mentioned it to indicate what he considered Virgin's challenge.

Virgin, whose £22,000,000 cash bid for the licence was identical to CSB's, alleges that letters from the commission to CSB asking for "clarification" of its bid prompted CSB to add £100 million to its business plan. Mr Scrivener submitted documents to show that the commission allowed CSB to sign a new shareholders' agreement to this effect more than four months after the application was submitted.

Mr Scrivener said that this was "contrary to the rules" which state that the applicant "can only enhance his application after it has been submitted if there is a material change affecting the applicant (such as a change in its corporate structure) and then only if the ITC decides such change is not unfair to other applicants".

Mr Scrivener also challenged the commission's decision that Virgin's programme proposals did not pass its quality threshold. He told the court that on October 19 last year, commission members met to consider papers prepared by staff which recommended that Virgin pass the quality test. "The members met again on October 25 when there were no fresh papers to consider and held that Virgin had failed the quality threshold," Mr Scrivener said. "Virgin claim this decision was legally unreasonable."

The two other unsuccessful bidding consortia, New Century Television and UKTV, were both refused permission to bring their own applications for judicial review against the commission, but yesterday sought to make submissions at Virgin's case. The case continues today.



Dyke's comment raised questions

Survey finds third of Surrey women abused

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

MIDDLE-CLASS women are as likely to be victims of domestic violence as those from the working class, according to a survey published yesterday.

A third of 434 women questioned in Surrey, the county with the highest divorce rate, had been attacked in their homes. Almost a quarter had been beaten up, 9 per cent had had their lives threatened and 5 per cent had been attacked with a weapon.

Nicola Dominy, research assistant at the Roehampton Institute which conducted the

study with Surrey County Council, said: "Surrey is a largely middle-class area and this study proves that domestic violence affects all classes and ethnic groups."

The study found that in addition to the physical injuries, domestic violence caused 16 per cent of women to live in constant fear, 6 per cent were suicidal and 7 per cent suffered depression.

Almost two thirds of the victims had not sought help because they were afraid, ashamed or considered it a private matter.



Richard Branson donned Moroccan dress yesterday to publicise his attempt to fly round the world in a balloon

Branson set for 'my best adventure'

By Oliver August

RICHARD BRANSON arrived in Marrakesh yesterday and declared his attempt to fly round the world by balloon would be "the most fantastic adventure I have ever embarked on".

The Virgin chairman joked about the training he and his two fellow balloonists still have to complete: "There is no other exhibition on earth that's ever taken off with people who have had to train for desert landings, arctic landings, jungle landings and sea landings."

Before leaving Britain he sent a good luck card to Henk Brink, his Dutch challenger. Mr Branson said: "I sent him a telegram wishing him all the best and telling him whoever wins has to pay for the drinks and the party to celebrate."

The heated and pressurised Virgin Global Challenger capsule is being assembled and tested in a Marrakesh military base before being taken to the launch site in the Atlas mountains by the Moroccan Army later this week.

SATURDAY
IN THE TIMES



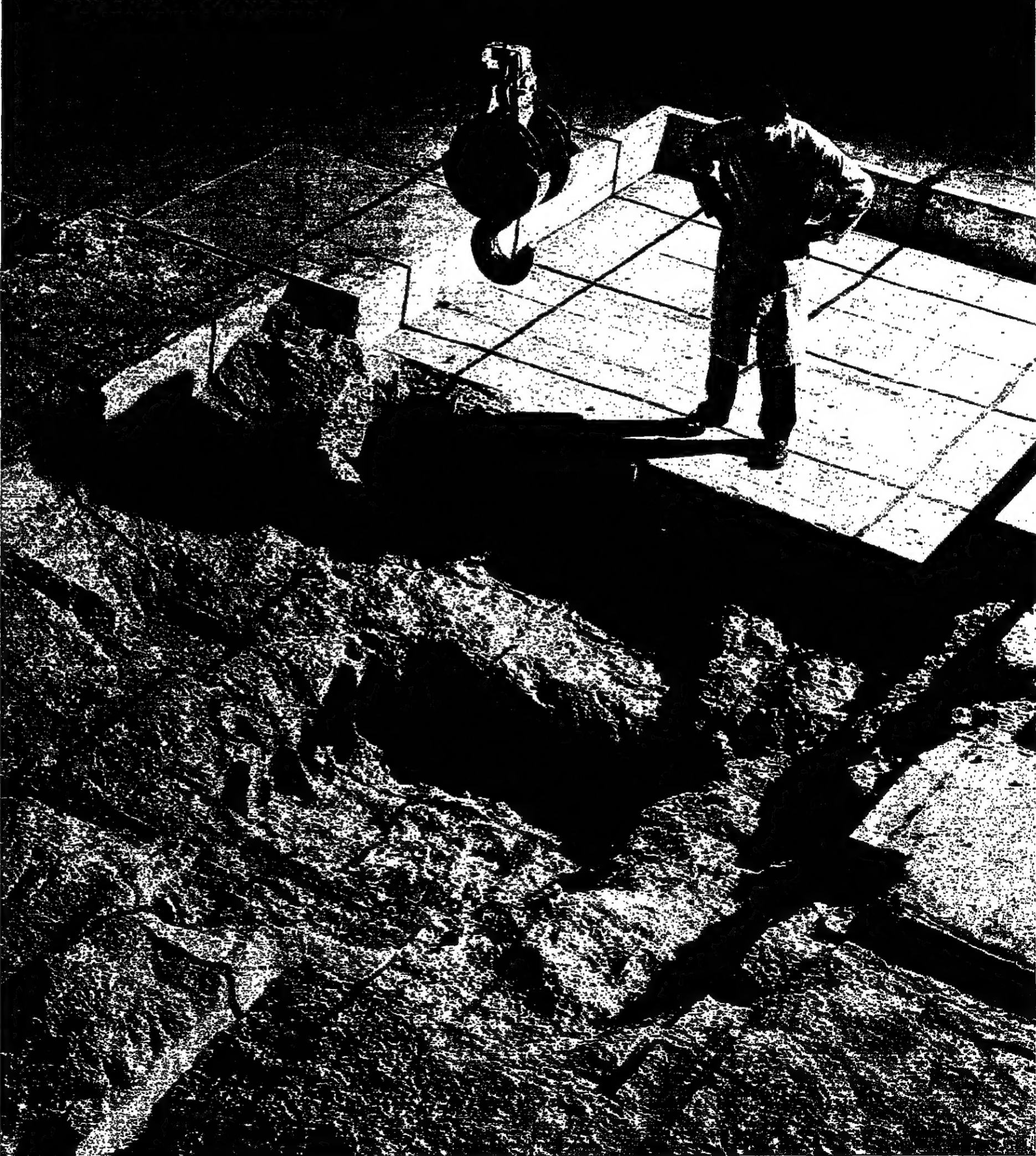
Britain's film star

Robert Crampton meets Andrew Macdonald, movie hit man, in the Magazine

Have teenager, will travel
How to have fun on a family holiday, in Weekend

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BRITISH
MEAT

Organisers challenge politicians over threats of wider curbs on satellite coverage

Call for £5 sports levy on BBC licence fee

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
AND JOHN GOODBODY

A FORMER Tory sports minister called yesterday for a £5 "sports levy" to be added to the TV licence fee to counter the growing competition from satellite broadcasters in covering top events.

Speaking at a London conference on the future of televised sport, Robert Atkins suggested that the levy, which would raise an additional £100 million a year, could create a new sports channel, jointly owned by the BBC and ITV, expanding their sports coverage.

The plan received a mixed response at the conference attended by more than 150 broadcasters, sports administrators and MPs. The event, organised by the national governing bodies of football, basketball, cricket, rugby union and by British Sky Broadcasting, was characterised by a series of clashes and debate was often heated.

Labour and Conservative MPs used the platform to accuse senior sports administrators of being swayed by financial greed in selling television rights to the satellite network BSkyB, partly owned by News International, owner of *The Times*. They demanded that eight listed sports events should be protected for coverage only by the BBC and ITV.

Leading figures in sport countered that it was insulting to suggest that the sports



BSkyB filming the England rugby team in training yesterday. Mr Atkins said that a levy could create a sports channel to be operated jointly by BBC and ITV

bodies should not be allowed to decide whether events should be covered by terrestrial or satellite stations. Sports bodies are united in opposing any extension to the eight listed events which currently cannot be shown on a pay-per-view basis, although they can be on a subscription channel such as BSkyB.

The listed events, which were reduced to eight by the

Government in 1991, are the Olympics, the Derby, the Grand National, Wimbledon finals, Test matches in England, the football World Cup finals, the FA Cup and Scottish Cup finals. Some MPs want to extend the list to include events such as the Five Nations rugby union championship and the Ryder Cup and the Open Championship in golf. Nick Hawkins, chair-

man of the Tory backbench sports committee, said: "We have to make sure we represent all electors."

Trevor Phillips, commercial director of the Football Association, which has recently sold the rights for the FA Cup for £125 million to a combination of ITV and Sky, said that during the 1980s the two terrestrial channels "operated as a cartel." Terry Blake, the

marketing manager of the Test and County Cricket Board, said: "Since 1994, we have doubled our exposure to 600 hours of cricket on television and trebled our income."

That money had been used to help to develop the grass roots of the game, he said.

David Elstein, the head of programming for BSkyB, said: "The list of restricted

events is an anachronism. The amount of sport on British television since Sky Sports was launched in April 1991 has quadrupled. Sky is now showing more than 9,000 hours every year — but only about 1 per cent of that has been transferred from terrestrial channels."

Last night the Department of National Heritage said Mr Atkins's levy plan would pose

"all sorts of practical difficulties".

John Major said this month that curbs on satellite screening were being considered.

Will Wyatt, the managing director of BBC Television, who was not among the delegates at the conference, said yesterday: "Events of national significance should be available to everyone. They are part of our heritage."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dead man lay in flat for nine months

The body of a 73-year-old man lay undiscovered in his flat for nine months while council officers continued to send out rent arrears and eviction notices, an inquest was told yesterday. Bailiffs found the remains of Arthur Bland in Maida Vale, west London, in September 1994.

Westminster City Council has subsequently ordered full inquiries to be made six weeks after a tenant's first arrears. Dr Paul Knapman, the Westminster Coroner, recorded an open verdict.

Student's body is found at Oxford

The parents of a student found dead at Magdalen College, Oxford, were last night travelling from their home in Berlin. Lars Day, 20, reading politics, philosophy and economics, was president of the junior common room. He was found with a plastic bag over his head.

Body identified

The body of a woman found in woodland near Fareham, Hampshire, was that of Janet Cooper, 58, who went missing on November 26. Police said there appeared to be no suspicious circumstances.

Bus death

Beryl Hunt, 53, died from head injuries after falling in the aisle of a bus that braked suddenly to avoid a dog. An inquest at Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, was told. Verdict: accidental death.

Father missing

A Railtrack executive who disappeared after leaving home to visit London by train more than a week ago is still missing. Peter Monaghan, 48, of Solihull, West Midlands, is married with four children.

Cannabis arrests

Three people were arrested when about 450 cannabis plants worth an estimated £100,000 were seized in a raid on a "drugs factory" in Highbridge, Somerset.

Waste of time

A lifeboat sent to the aid of what was reported to be a dinghy on fire a mile off Walton on the Naze, Essex, found a bright orange wheeled bin ablaze.

Piped music

Sir Colin Davis, principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, has been elected the 32nd Pipsmoker of the Year by The Pipsmokers' Council.

CORRECTION

Finchley Children's Music Group (photograph, January 15) is trained by a group of professional musicians, not by volunteers.

Four convicted of Scream theft

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

FOUR Norwegians were convicted yesterday of the theft of *The Scream* by Edvard Munch, stolen from the Oslo National Museum in 1994 and recovered with the help of Scotland Yard's art and antiques squad.

At the end of a three-month trial, the suspected mastermind Pal Enger, 28, a footballer, was sentenced by the Oslo City Court to six years and three months in prison. The four were also convicted of attempting to sell stolen property. William Asheim, 20, and Bjorn Grytdal, 28, were sentenced to four years and nine months in prison, and Jan Olsen, 50, was given two years and eight months for charges that included attempting to sell stolen property.

In the theft of *The Scream*, valued at £40 million, two thieves climbed a ladder, broke a window and made off with the painting in 50 seconds. They left a postcard saying: "Thanks for the poor security." In an undercover operation, two British officers posed as a representative of an art foundation wanting to buy the painting and a minder protecting both the buyer and his money.

They called themselves "Chuck" and "Sid" and agreed to buy the painting for about \$500,000 (£325,000).

A meeting was set up in the car park of a motorway rest area. "Sid" and two of the thieves remained in a hotel room with the money, awaiting a phone call from "Chuck" telling him to hand over the money once he had seen the painting. "Chuck" did just that, but he also called Detective Chief Inspector John Butler, head of the arts and antiques squad at the time. Norwegian police made the necessary arrests.

Next Tuesday, BBC1 will screen an *Omnibus* programme on the case in which Enger protests his innocence.



The Scream by Edvard Munch, valued at £40m

Parish sees red over Orange

A VICAR has upset parishioners and Christian groups by approving the use of his church as an aerial for a mobile telephone company.

They say they are appalled by the prospect of mobile phone users, who include drug dealers and criminals, sending their calls via a House of God. The Rev David Wills said that if the plan for Mossley Hill parish church in Liverpool to be used by Orange was anything other than morally responsible, he would not contemplate being part of it.

and said "normal phones were used for drug deals".

In November, Mr Wills refused to allow a British Legion Remembrance Day parade to finish at the church. He would not allow "outside groups to determine what happens in the House of God".

Maureen Brindle, 52, a member of the local British Legion, said of the aerial: "It goes against everything he has said in the past about outside groups using the church. This is so hypocritical. Folk will be praying to God in the church

and above their heads the aerial on the tower will be doing the work of the Devil."

Grot Barlow, of the National Council for Christian Standards in Society, said: "I am surprised and appalled by the idea and one would hope it never becomes a reality."

Mr Wills, who urgently needs £200,000 for building work, will receive "a few thousand pounds" a year for an aerial and relay dish on the church tower if the plan is approved by the Liverpool Diocesan Council.

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Airline tickets and £4,000 phone bills helped to push the Duchess of York into debt

Taste for overseas trips dissipates royal bank balance

BY EMMA WILKINS

THE Duchess of York's penchant for exotic foreign trips has earned her a reputation for profligacy and proved a big drain on her finances. Only the best hotel rooms in the smartest resorts will do for the Duchess, who is known to rely on the generosity of friends and contacts to finance some of her trips.

Her most recent foreign holiday was to Australia, where she visited her sister Jane Leade in Sydney and then flew on to Melbourne to watch Thomas Muster, an acclaimed tennis player, at a practice session.

The Duchess decided to divert to Melbourne on the spur of the moment two weeks ago when she met Mr. Muster at a party during a charity trip to Qatar. She flew from the Gulf to Australia at her own expense, was given a courtesy upgrade to first class, and stayed in a five-star hotel. She returned home last week.

Although other members of the Royal Family enjoy frequent stints away from their offices, sketching holidays in Scotland attract little press interest.

The Duchess's timing can be unfortunate: when her complaints that she was hard

up were published in *Hello!* last summer, the Duchess was on holiday in Bermuda with her daughters. It later emerged that the holiday was funded by Robert Stigwood, a musical impresario, who is a good friend.

The Duchess's epic break in Thailand and Indonesia after her separation from the Duke of York in 1992 is estimated to have run to six figures. She then flew on to Australia.

Between the summers of 1993 and 1994, the Duchess enjoyed six holidays, including a stint trekking on the lower slopes of Everest. That trip was partly paid for by a charity and is estimated to have cost £10,000.

The Duchess took five trips over the following 12 months including a visit to Kenya. She usually takes two skiing holidays each year, to Verbier and Klosters. But so far this year she has been absent from the slopes, reportedly to cut down spending.

In June last year, the Duchess visited Los Angeles and stayed at one of the city's most expensive hotels, the Bel Air, where rooms start at £200 with suites costing £1,800 a night.

The Duchess's shopping

proceeds is legendary: on a recent trip to New York she is said to have spent £3,000 on 20 pairs of shoes during a half-hour shopping spree. She flew to America on Concorde, which costs £5,000 for a return fare.

While she has claimed to be cutting back on unnecessary expenses, the Duchess spent £10,000 on clothes in one month last year. She chose outfits from Isabel Kristensen, a Danish designer, handbags by Maya Hindmarch and shoes from Jimmy Choo. Hindmarch bags cost between £250 and £400 and Choo's shoes about £200.

The Duchess's generosity is another cause of financial problems. When she moved into Kingsbourne, an eight-bedroom Victorian house in Wentworth, Surrey, last year, she threw a champagne party for 150 people. The celebrations, which cost some £3,000, were designed to thank the decorators, removal men, builders and estate agents who had helped her to move from Romedale Lodge.

The house was completely redecorated before the Duchess moved in and the rent is an estimated £6,000 a month.

The Duchess employs a butler, driver, cook, nanny, housekeeper, dresser and a staff of three assistants in her private office. The wages bill is said to be about £32,000 a month.

Her hair is cut by Nicky Clarke, who charges £180 a session. The Duchess is, however, visiting him less frequently as an economy measure.

Membership of the Wentworth Club, her gym, and paying for personal sessions with her fitness trainer, are estimated to cost about £3,000 a year.

One of her most extravagant expenses is the telephone - a characteristic she shares with her sister-in-law, the Princess of Wales. The quarterly bill is said to be £4,000.



Work and play: the Duchess promoting Budge in New York, and in Klosters, a trip that she has forgone this year, reportedly to cut costs



Still waiting for riches from book deals

BY EMMA WILKINS AND JON ASHWORTH

THE financial affairs of the Duchess of York have fascinated the public and the press since her close relationship with her adviser was disclosed four years ago. It was John Bryan, the American business consultant, who helped the Duchess to negotiate deals in the early 1990s that were meant to secure her financial future.

Mr Bryan no longer figures in the Duchess's personal affairs. The Duchess, who gave up her publishing job when she married the Duke of York in 1986, hoped that she would make millions from her books about *Budge the Little Helicopter* after her separation in 1992. But the expected royalties have not



Bryan: helped with contract negotiations

materialised, partly because of an unfavourable business contract according to a recent interview with the Duchess in *Hello!* That magazine is another lucrative source of income for the Duchess, who

has appeared ten times in photographic features. It has been forecast that *Sleepy Kids*, the company which owns the worldwide TV and merchandising rights for *Budge*, would earn about £800,000 from television and merchandising in the United States this year. The Duchess is unlikely to receive a share of more than 20 per cent, which would bring her an income this year of £160,000.

The longer-term future may be brighter. *Sleepy Kids* said it was "not outrageous" to talk of earnings of £300 million from sales in the United States over five years after a contract was signed last July to screen the *Budge* adventures on American television.

The Duchess promoted *Budge* products at Bloomingdale's department store in

New York during the lucrative Christmas shopping period.

On her separation from the Duke, the Duchess received an estimated £2 million settlement but most of the sum is in trust for their daughters, Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie.

The Duke, whose civil list payment of £249,000 is refunded to the Treasury by the Queen, earns £30,544 as a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Navy. Eighty per cent of his civil list income goes on staff costs, but he is said to contribute handsomely towards the costs of his children.

An estimated £10,000 a year is spent on the daughters' education and £15,000 a year is contributed towards the £72,000 cost of the Duchess's

rented home in Wentworth, Surrey.

The Duchess hopes to make more money from two books on Queen Victoria, *Travels with Queen Victoria* (1991) and *Victoria and Albert: Life at Osborne House* (1993). A film on the life of the young Queen Victoria is planned by 20th Century Fox.

Other financial plans include a deal with Bantam Doubleday Dell in New York to write two children's books about a girl called Amanda who travels around the world. The Duchess is negotiating with Tri-Star pictures for an option on her story *Heather Blaze*, the adventures of two mares with parallel but very different lives.

Elizabeth's Story, page 15
Diary, page 16

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Court throws out woman's cash plea in vasectomy case

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A WOMAN should not take for granted a lover's assurance that he cannot make her pregnant after a vasectomy, the Court of Appeal said yesterday.

It threw out a damages claim against the British Pregnancy Advisory Service by Alison Goodwill, 48, a teacher from Oxford, who became pregnant by her married lover, Mr Justice Thorpe and Lord Justice Peter Gibson allowed an appeal by the clinic against Oxford County Court's refusal last March to dismiss Mrs Goodwill's claim as being "frivolous or vexatious".

Lord Justice Gibson said he was left in no doubt that Judge Paul Clark had been wrong at the County Court not to strike out the action. He said that Mrs Goodwill, who was married with one son, but who later divorced, met Ross Mackinlay, a married man in March 1988 and began having sex with him a month later. She had had her contraceptive coil removed after being told by Mr Mackinlay that he had undergone a vasectomy.

But in April 1989 she discovered she was pregnant and gave birth to a baby daughter in November. Later she

launched her claim against the clinic on the basis that it had failed to give adequate warning of the possibility of Mr Mackinlay's vasectomy reversing itself naturally. She claimed she suffered loss and damage because of the cost of the birth, her daughter's upbringing and loss of income.

Mr Justice Thorpe said: "A woman exploring the development of a sexual relationship with a new partner takes much on trust before experience corroborates or exposes his assurances. Her responsibility is to protect herself



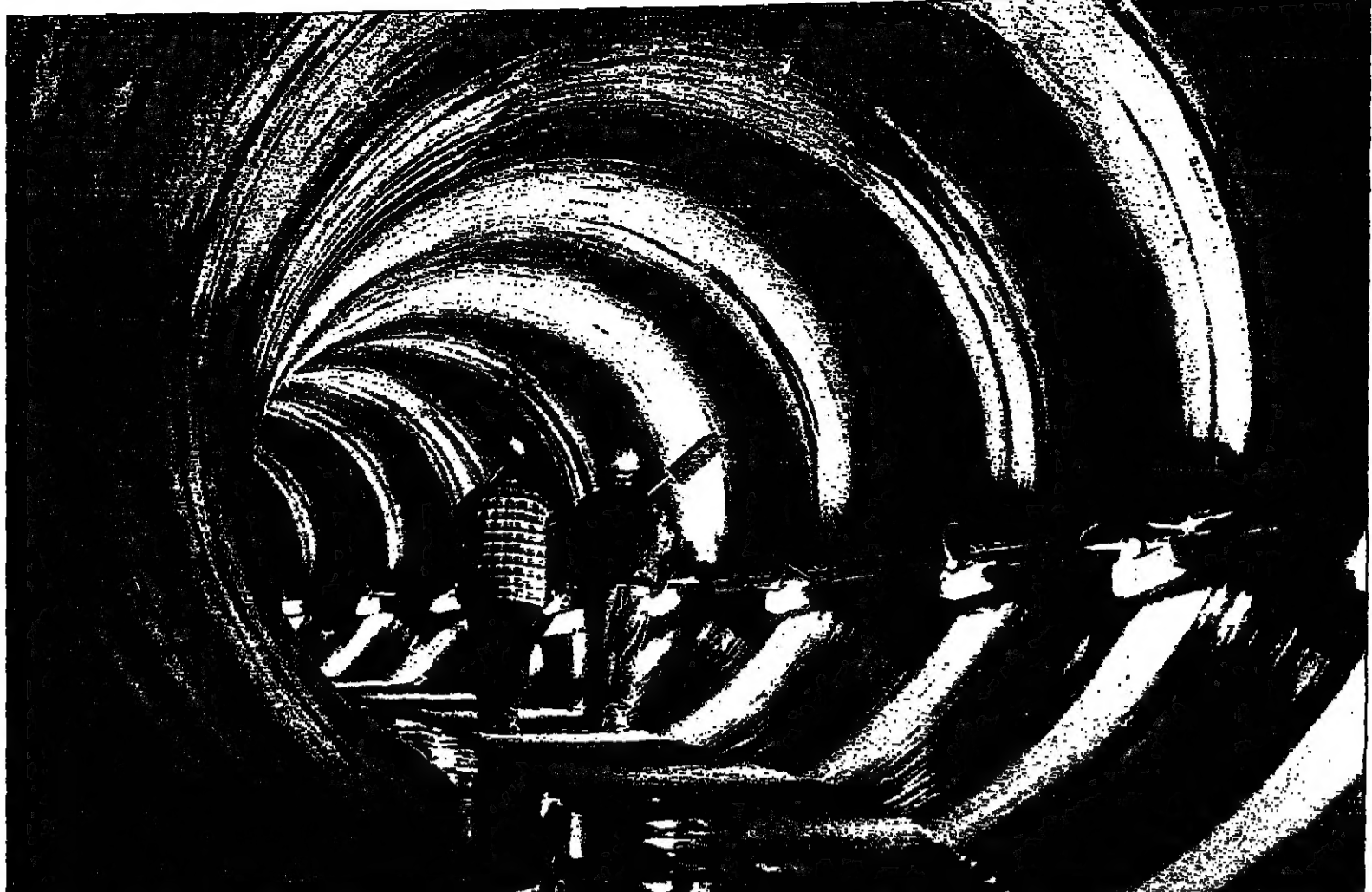
Thorpe urged women to take impartial advice

against unwanted conception and to take independent advice on whatever facts he presents."

Lord Justice Gibson said there was no way the clinic could have owed any duty of care to Mrs Goodwill or that it could have known that its advice to Mr Mackinlay would be communicated to her and relied on as a warranty of permanent infertility. "It could know nothing about the likely course of action of future sexual partners of Mr Mackinlay," the judge said. "At that time it had no knowledge of her, she was not an existing sexual partner of Mr Mackinlay but was merely, like any other woman in the world, a potential future sexual partner of his."

"It is beyond belief that in ceasing to use any contraceptive method this mature educated woman was induced by and relied on Mr Mackinlay's bare assertion of her that he could not have any more children." She had been warned by her own GP of the possible risk of Mr Mackinlay's vasectomy reversing itself and her becoming pregnant, he said. "She took that risk."

Body and Mind, page 16



Workers checking a multimillion-pound sewerage pipe before opening it to the public - literally - at the weekend. The pipe, which has been installed 20 metres below the seabed off Whitby Bay, Tyne and Wear, goes into use next month. Before then, Northumbrian Water is offering 1,500 local people the chance of a guided walk along its 3.4 kilometres after the official opening by Carol Vorderman from Channel 4's Count-

Water firm offers undersea guided tour as a pipe-opener

down programme. The sewer, which will collect contaminated storm water from the North Tyneside area and pump it out to sea, is part of a £150 million programme designed to improve bathing waters from Cleveland

to the Scottish borders. David Charlton, the project manager, said: "We decided to offer people who live here a chance to go for a walk through the pipe so they can take in at first hand how complex this work has

been. For three years they have put up with a lot of disturbance as the engineering has taken place, but many people cannot appreciate just how involved the project was because much of it has taken place underground. We thought Carol Vorderman would be the perfect person to open the tunnel because she is well known for having a good head on her shoulders and she also has a masters degree in engineering."

Science press 'got Pill story wrong'

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

THE press did "an excellent job" in alerting women to new information about the dangers of contraceptive pills, according to the Chairman of the Committee on the Safety of Medicines. It was the scientific press, he says, who got it wrong.

The committee caused controversy in October when it issued new advice indicating that some newer brands of the Pill had higher risks of stroke than older ones. The committee was criticised by some for issuing the advice before the data on which it was based had been published.

In a letter in *Nature*, Professor Michael Rawlins says that the committee had been concerned that the lay press might publish misleading scare stories. He says: "The consequence would have been unplanned pregnancies, an increase in the abortion rate and the various risks that these entail. In fact, the lay press did an excellent job of reporting accurately the rele-

vant brands, and of passing on our message that no one need stop taking oral contraceptives. In contrast to our expectations, it was the scientific press that failed to get the facts right."

He is critical of *Nature*, which quoted incorrect figures for the absolute risk of stroke, and of the *British Medical Journal*, which also published inaccurate figures.

Once the risk estimates quoted in a *Nature* editorial are corrected, "the whole thrust of the leading article, that the CSM acted unnecessarily, becomes untenable", Professor Rawlins writes.

He defends the way the announcement was made. *Nature's* claim that sudden announcements will almost always cause panic is extraordinary, he says. "The press notice emphasised that there was no need to panic, and this was clearly explained on British television. How on earth can an announcement like this be made gradually?"

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Chancellor attacks expansion

Drop in university applicants reverses decade of growth

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

DEMAND for university places has fallen for the first time since the Government launched its massive expansion of higher education ten years ago.

The number of applications is down by almost 5,000 this year in spite of an increase in the number of 18-year-olds. The fall, and the rising number of drop-outs reported this week by vice-chancellors, is expected to make it easier for candidates to gain a university place this autumn.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) said 349,941 people had applied for places by January 12, 1.5 per cent down on last year.

The figures emerged as the chancellor of a leading technological university condemned the higher-education expansion strategy. Sir John Mason, of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, said: "The decision to greatly expand higher education before attending to the schools was like adding an extra storey to a house with crumbling foundations. It makes no sense."

"Since the war, schools have been used as a political football rather than in their proper role of implanting the discipline, knowledge and skills required by our workforce."

Teenagers were leaving school "illiterate, innumerate, inarticulate and incapable of earning a living" because of

government spending cuts, Sir John said in his last public address before retiring as chancellor.

He was against lowering university entrance standards, however. He said that in demanding subjects such as mathematics, physics and chemistry the number of well-qualified applicants so far that "large and famous departments that formerly demanded three As at advanced level are now glad to accept 2 Bs and a C and offer remedial teaching in mathematics."

"If our standards are allowed to fall, the rapidly developing countries will cease to send their students here for training. This could have serious consequences not only for the reputation and finances of our universities

but for investment in Britain as a whole."

Jess Enderby, of Ucas, said: "I do not think there will be any problem for appropriately qualified applicants to get into university this year. However, the popular universities and courses will always be more difficult to get into."

Mr Enderby added: "There are still a lot of students being influenced by the financial hardship factor and possibly that, combined with the improving job situation, is keeping more people away."

Figures suggest demand for higher education may have reached a plateau. There were 402,978 applicants in 1994, the year of merged polytechnic and university application bodies, and 406,991 last year. Applications to the Universities' Central Council on Admissions rose steadily from 1987 to 1993 after a fall of nearly 3,000 in 1986.

Ucas has yet to analyse this year's figures but there are signs that some of the biggest rises in applications have been at colleges of higher education rather than at new universities.

A total of 290,596 students gained a place at university last year, bringing the total full-time student population to more than a million, 50 per cent higher than in 1969. Further growth is officially on hold while Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, conducts a review of the future of higher education.



Popular universities will still be oversubscribed



Hannah Goring of Bonhams holds the Hercules, with Venus, left, and a Eurydice, right. Below, a rare picture of Miss Adams in younger days

Charity sale for recluse's £3m hoard

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

ART treasures worth an estimated £3 million are to be auctioned for charity on behalf of a mysterious recluse. The auctioneer Bonhams says that hardly anything is known about Sylvia Phillips Adams, aged 88, who spent her life building up the collection.

It is known that she worked for London art dealers during the late 1920s and 1930s, and eventually set up her own

business, buying at all the top London auction houses. She never married, became a recluse about 20 years ago and is now confined to a nursing home by Alzheimer's disease. Following her wishes the collection was to be left to charity, her doctor has joined her accountant and lawyer in founding a trust that will benefit various causes, including the poor and children.

The 800 works of art include 300 Renaissance plaquettes, and a number of rare Renaissance bronzes. There is a

1500s image of Hercules attributed to Antico, the court sculptor to the Gonzagas of Mantua, and a 1690s Venus and Cupid by Hubert Gerhard, court sculptor of Munich. The Antico sculpture alone is expected to fetch more than £1 million, but such is his rarity on the market that a value is virtually impossible to set.

Little is known about the owner's family background. Bonhams believes that Miss Adams came from a "well-to-do family", as her father appears to have worked only as a lay preacher.



Audit Office gives warning of nursery voucher fraud

By OUR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

SECURITY measures are being brought in to combat fears of a black market in nursery school vouchers. An Audit Commission report due out next month will caution against the dangers of fraud in the four pilot areas where the scheme is being run: from Easter, before going national next year.

Vouchers worth £1,000 are due to be delivered next month and, from April, parents of four-year-olds in the London boroughs of Wandsworth, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea, and in Norfolk, will be entitled to exchange them for education at approved nurseries. The Audit

Commission yesterday confirmed its caution about a potential black market in vouchers, to be reported tonight on BBC2 in *First Sight* in the South East.

The Department for Education and Employment said measures were already planned. Applications would be checked against child benefit records, to ensure they only went to parents with children of the right age. Parents would be required to provide proof of identity if their address differed from that on records.

Each voucher would bear the child's name and a serial number. Capita Management Services, which was running

the scheme, would check when each voucher was redeemed that the name and serial number matched its records. Vouchers would contain security features, like bank notes, to guard against counterfeiting.

Ministers have already acknowledged that the scheme may run into difficulties because of a lack of nurseries. Robin Squire, an Education Minister, has admitted that some parents may find there are not enough nursery places — private, voluntary or local authority — to meet their new entitlement. The Government is confident any shortage will be overcome by fresh supply.



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Yorkshire Tories divided over ex-Chancellor

Lamont looks north in his quest for a political lifeline

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

NORMAN LAMONT'S political future will be at stake tomorrow night when he tries to persuade the Tory faithful in Harrogate and Knaresborough to select him as their general election candidate.

Party activists in the North Yorkshire seat appear divided over whether or not the former Chancellor will provide them with the best chance of heading off a strong challenge from the Liberal Democrats.

Mr Lamont has reached the final shortlist of three after at least 12 attempts at winning a seat since his Kingston-upon-Thames constituency was abolished by boundary changes. Harrogate, one of Britain's first spa towns, used to attract the sick to take its healing waters. Now Mr Lamont sees it as his best chance of reviving his political health.

Shortly after 8pm tomorrow, he will rise to his feet in the basement conference centre at the town's Majestic Hotel and place his future in the hands of the 300 party members expected to turn up. His supporters say he is just the man to put Harrogate on the map, in stark contrast to Robert Banks, the retiring MP, who has been criticised

for ignoring the constituency over the past 11 years. "Anybody is better than Banks," said Alex Hobson, 65, manager of The Ginnel Antique Centre. "Norman Lamont is his own man and he is certainly not afraid of speaking his mind."

Despite having backed John Redwood in last year's party leadership contest, Mr Lamont has recently declared a newfound support for the Prime Minister. His opponents, however, say that he will never be forgiven for bringing in VAT on fuel and cutting mortgage relief. More to the point, he is not a local man. Knaresborough Tories have written to the executive committee complaining that none of the shortlisted three comes from the area.

Among the other candidates, Mr Lamont will face a strong challenge from David Ruffley, 33, special adviser to the present Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke. Mr Ruffley, a former corporate lawyer on the right of the party, is at least a northerner — he was born in Bolton. But whether that will sway the Yorkshire Tories remains to be seen.

The other contender is Ian Liddell-Grainger, a Tyneside

businessman, who stood unsuccessfully for Tyne and Wear at the European elections in 1994. None of the candidates is odds-on favourite.

Stephen Moorehouse, a solicitor and party member, said that the candidates reflected the division of opinion in the selection committee. "I haven't made my mind up and I suspect that the majority of members are going to the meeting with a completely open mind."

Mr Lamont may be hampered by the allegation that Tory Central Office put pressure on local officials to secure the seat for him. Better, so the argument goes, to have Mr Lamont busy fighting for a seat than voicing criticism of the Prime Minister. But the allegation is rejected by local Tories. Mr Moorehouse said: "Nothing could be further from the truth. I have not had a single person saying that I must vote for Lamont or not vote for Lamont. To suggest there has been outside pressure is absolute riddle."

Estelle Edwards, the Tory Association chairman, said: "It's the usual procedure. There must be complete confidentiality. It isn't fair on the candidates to have their names bandied about."

Harrogate, populated mainly by a well-to-do middle class — "urban, old and affluent,"



documents pledging not to talk to the press about the candidates. Local officials refuse even to acknowledge that the selection meeting is taking place.

as one man put it, has been Tory for as long as anyone can remember. But whoever is chosen will have to fight a strong campaign against the Liberal Democrats.

Although the Tories have a majority of 12,589, they have lost key wards in the boundary changes and their national majority has shrunk to about 9,000. The Liberal Democrats have a known candidate in Phil Willis, the local council leader, and consider the seat winnable.

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IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons, head-bench debates followed by trade and industry questions and debates on Employment, Contributions, Unemployment, Regulations, Housing, Benefit, Supply of Information and Council Tax, Benefit (Amendment) Regulations, Income Support (General) (Jobseeker's Allowance) Regulations, Social Security (Back to Work Bonus) Regulations, In the Lords, education, co-operative sector in social policy and business, Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill.

TODAY in the Commons, questions to the Prime Minister followed by a debate on the future of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Ashdown striving to ensure his party has clout

Don't write off Paddy Ashdown and the Liberal Democrats. They have survived the Tony Blair phenomenon and could still have an influential role in the next Parliament. That will be the sub-text of the mini-campaign he will launch this weekend with an interview on the Frost programme (now part of the formal new year ritual for party leaders), press articles and what is being billed as a big speech on Monday.

It has been a frustrating 18 months for Mr Ashdown since Mr Blair started dominating the political agenda. The Liberal Democrats have found it hard to present a clear identity. Yesterday, Mr Ashdown pointed out that the Liberal Democrats had originally highlighted the idea of a stakeholder society and complained that Labour's version was vague and begged questions on relations with the unions.

Most discussion of the Liberal Democrats has been in terms of their relations with Mr Blair, however often Mr Ashdown may claim that the Liberal Democrats have sharper policies than Labour on education, a single currency and the environment. He has seemed on the fringe of the main party debate. The Liberal Democrats have also lost to Labour some of their brightest policy thinkers from their former SDP wing, such as Roger Liddle, David Marquand, John Dickie and Andrew Adonis, who helped to give the party authority on national issues.

The worry of the party's remaining social democrats is that, despite the official move away from equidistance between the parties, the leadership has not been positive enough about Mr Blair. Indeed has too often been carping about him and too keen to adopt a self-conscious, and self-defeating, left-wing posture which will damage its electoral prospects.

The Liberal Democrats have suffered in the polls, falling from more than 20 per cent in spring 1994 to 14 per cent in the second half of last year, according to MORI. But this is still higher than during most of the last Parliament, while occasional high-profile events, such as the defection

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

of Emma Nicholson last month, can give the party an immediate boost of between 2½ and 6 points according to two recent polls. The party continues to do well in parliamentary by-elections and in local elections, though with some tailing-off in council by-elections recently.

The party's electoral strategy is to concentrate on advancing regionally more than nationally, particularly in the South West and in target seats dotted round the country. This cannot be achieved entirely by local campaigns and tactical voting. The party's near miss in several seats in the June 1994 European elections showed that the party requires a national prominence and credibility if it is to avoid being squeezed by the overall Labour advance.

Mr Ashdown occasionally appears impatient but always bounces back with a new plan. While specifically avoiding any suggestion of pre-election deals or pacts (not on the agenda), he will on Monday revive the question of post-election co-operation by outlining what an incoming government should do. He will list the key issues which have to be tackled (education, the economy, welfare reform, the environment and Europe) and will emphasise a timescale going beyond a single Parliament. He will also discuss not just the contents of a constitutional reform programme, but also how it should be achieved.

A part from raising the party's profile, Mr Ashdown's aim is to signal the terms of possible relations between the Liberal Democrats and Labour, implying backing for a common agenda rather than any formal coalition. Mr Blair has always been careful to leave open the door to such co-operation, as part of a more pluralist style of politics, whether or not Labour gains a working overall majority in the next Parliament. But Labour retains the upper hand in any dialogue with the Liberal Democrats.

PETER RIDDELL

Rebel MP returns to the fold . . . for the time being

BY ALICE THOMSON, POLITICAL REPORTER

JOHN MAJOR's parous Commons majority was given a fillip yesterday with the return to the fold of the whipless rebel Sir Richard Body.

But the Eurosceptic MP seemed determined to continue punishing the Prime Minister for having once said: "When I hear the name Richard Body, I hear the sound of white coats flapping." Only minutes after his return was announced he insisted that it was "temporary".

The last whipless rebel has kept the Government on tenterhooks for 14 months since he resigned the whip voluntarily in protest at the Govern-

ment's policies on Europe. With the defection of Emma Nicholson last month and likely Tory losses at forthcoming by-elections in Hensworth and Staffordshire South East, the whips were desperate to get him back.

Sir Richard, MP for Holland with Boston, said he was proud to have been called "barney" by the Prime Minister. The sticking point had been the Government's position on fishing rights. He made it clear that he would not re-apply for the whip until ministers agreed to reform the Common Fisheries Policy.

He horrified loyal Tories by threatening to stand as an independent Tory for the newly formed seat of Boston

and Skegness. At one stage Conservative Central Office tried to pressure his constituency into bringing their MP back into line.

Yesterday lunchtime Sir Richard spent an hour and a half with Sir Alastair Goodlad, the Chief Whip. He then slipped out of a back door and was bundled into a car. Mr Goodlad said: "I am pleased that Sir Richard is once more in receipt of the Conservative whip."

But later Sir Richard told reporters that he had not taken the whip but would support the Government where he could. After an hour of frantic telephone calls with the Government majority yo-yoing from three to five, Sir Richard finally agreed that he had

accepted the whip "temporarily". Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said: "I am sure that Heaven rejoices at the return of one prodigal sinner and that applies in Downing Street too."

It later became clear that Sir Richard had used the full weight of his 40 years as a backbencher to lecture the Chief Whip on what was going wrong with the party. He said last night: "Alastair was a good listener. Except on Europe I support the Government. I don't think it's doing a bad job."

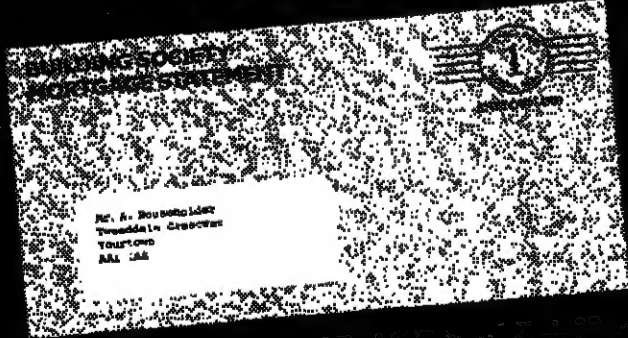
He said that he could not take the whip permanently until he was satisfied that British travellers would not have to relinquish their exclusive rights to fish in in-shore waters.



Sir Richard yesterday

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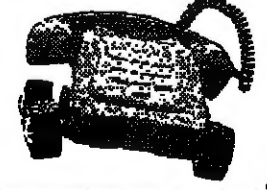


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EU sacks British official for single currency attack

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN STRASBOURG

BERNARD CONNOLLY, the British European Union official, who wrote a book attacking monetary union last year, was sacked yesterday by the Commission in Brussels for publishing without permission and damaging the interests of the EU.

The Commission notified Mr Connolly of the unprecedented decision by the five-member disciplinary council which heard the charges against him at a closed hearing last month. Mr Connolly's lawyers voiced surprise last night that the only witness called against him — the head of his department — had acknowledged that he had read the book.

The 46-year-old Briton, a career European civil servant who has worked in Brussels since 1978 and headed the unit that monitors the exchange rate mechanism, was suspended from duty last September after publishing *The Rotten Heart of Europe — The Dirty War for Europe's Money*. Mr Connolly said last night he was disappointed by the way that the disciplinary

council, headed by David Williamson, the Commission's British Secretary-General, failed to "take into account the detailed refutation of the Commission's allegations which we provided."

His lawyers said they had been surprised by the rushed manner of the disciplinary proceedings and the calling of a prosecution witness against Mr Connolly without warning. Giovanni Ravasio, the director-general of Mr



Connolly, accused of "flouting loyalty"

Connolly's department, gave evidence on the impact of the book but admitted he had not read it, said Jacques Sanbon, his lawyer. Commission officials were not available for comment.

In its ruling, signed by Franz de Koster, the director-general of personnel, the Commission said that Mr Connolly had breached two articles in the EU staff conditions. These covered the publication of books without permission and actions which damage the interests of the Community.

The council said Mr Connolly did not seek permission for his book when he took unpaid leave last summer because he knew that he would be refused, having previously failed to receive approval.

Mr Connolly "could not have been unaware of the fact" that the contents of the book conflicted with policies adopted by the Commission in its role as executor of the Maastricht treaty and the project for economic and monetary union (EMU), it said. His action had "flouted the loyalty and honest-

ty" which he was bound to show towards the Commission and his superiors, it said. His conduct had "seriously damaged the interests of the Community".

Mr Connolly has argued that by airing his view that EMU was a threat to Europe he had been acting in the Union's interests. He also insisted that nothing in the book was confidential.

The sacking takes effect next month, which his lawyers said appeared to be aimed at gagging Mr Connolly over the next fortnight. He had been due on Monday to give evidence to the House of Lords European Committee and to appear before the Commons Treasury Select Committee later this month.

While there is no direct course of appeal, European Union civil servants can challenge the legality of a dismissal at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. Mr Connolly has a case pending there, alleging that the Commission acted illegally against him. An appeal would not be heard for at least two years.

Berlusconi taunts journalists as bribe trial begins

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN MILAN AND RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

SILVIO BERLUSCONI, the Italian multimillionaire media tycoon and former Prime Minister, sneered at journalists and begged the court to stop the case being broadcast live on his own television channels as his trial on corruption charges opened yesterday.

The small courtroom in Milan's Palace of Justice was so cramped that reporters squeezed into a steel cage for prisoners. The Forza Italia party leader, 59, sat on a bench next to them. When he strode into the courtroom, he declared: "I don't feel like a defendant." But the strain of the trial began to tell as proceedings began.

On trial with Signor Berlusconi are Paolo, his younger brother, and five associates of his Fininvest business empire. They are accused of paying 380 million lire (£150,000) in bribes to tax inspectors reviewing the company's books. Paolo, who was not in court, has admitted making the payments, but

claims that his brother had no knowledge of them.

During a break in the proceedings, Signor Berlusconi strode to the cage holding about 20 hapless journalists, and declared: "This is where you belong." The scribes demanded to know why his lawyers had requested that the trial not be screened live. Signor Berlusconi said he did not want it to turn into a spectacle. But judicial sources said he clearly wanted to limit damage to his image.

The judge compromised by allowing RAI state television to tape the proceedings for an edited broadcast. The trial was adjourned until January 26.

The Italian media are portraying the trial as a duel for power between Signor Berlusconi and Antonio Di Pietro, the Milan magistrate who led the Clean Hands anti-corruption drive. Signor Berlusconi has accused him of being "politically motivated". Signor Di Pietro has since resigned as a magistrate and is pursuing a political career.



Silvio Berlusconi during a break in court yesterday

France and Nato ease nuclear rift

BY MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

FRANCE outlined yesterday its decision to play a closer part in Nato military affairs, but held back from joining two key alliance policy committees.

Gerard Herrera, the French Ambassador, warned the 16-nation North Atlantic Council in Brussels against any hopes of France returning to "the situation that existed before 1966", when the French pulled out of Nato's integrated military command structure.

But yesterday's announcement of closer ties was clearly intended to provide the French with a voice on all key military and security issues — including, for the first time in 30 years, nuclear policy.

Since 1966, France has taken part only in Nato foreign ministers' meetings and has kept its armed forces outside Nato's military command. M Herrera said France was now prepared to discuss nuclear issues.

The country will resume its seat on the alliance's military committee, the Nato situation centre, the defence college in Rome and defence school in Oberammergau, and re-establish a permanent military mission to Nato. It will not rejoin the alliance's Defence Planning Committee or Nuclear Planning Group.

Kinkel sure Britain will back euro

BY GEORGE BROCK
EUROPEAN EDITOR

BRITAIN will not be able to resist the tempting economic advantages and "logicality" of a European single currency system and will join soon after it is set up, Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, predicted yesterday.

Herr Kinkel said in Oxford that the success of monetary union would force Britain to participate. He quoted Lord Howe, who once said that in Europe Britain "usually does the right thing in the end, only 20 years too late". Herr Kinkel said that he would not go as far as that but "it is better to catch the boat than to swim after it". He insisted that monetary union would start on time in 1999.

Attending the opening of a centre for European law at Oxford University, Herr Kinkel described the Anglo-German relationship as "un-spectacular and down to earth, but close and intense". It was an "alliance of convictions". Both countries were in favour of an open trading system and against protectionism, wanted to restructure their economies, backed opening the European Union and Nato to Eastern European states and valued links to America.

Central bank fears, page 25

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Security experts say only world's leading anti-terror units can safely capture a hijacked vessel at sea

Risks stacked against commando operation

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

RESCUE OPTIONS

TURKISH commandos have no easy options in preparing for a possible recovery of the hijacked ferry. Releasing hostages held on a moving vessel on the high seas is regarded by even the most experienced special forces units as one of the most dangerous and vulnerable operations.

If the negotiations fail to free the hostages and a decision is taken to use force, there are only two options: to use helicopters or raiding craft if the ferry is on the move or to persuade the armed gunmen to dock the ship when a less risky operation could be mounted from the shore.

"Only the most highly specialised military units should contemplate carrying out such an operation," said one British military source.

The principal challenge would be to get alongside the ferry — in rigid raiding craft — without being spotted by the terrorists. The element of surprise would be crucial and the exercise would have to be carried out in the dark.

"Then there would be the difficult task of trying to board the vessel without alerting the gunmen," the source said.

Helicopters approaching the ferry would be noisy and would be regarded as the

second choice for sending in commandos. Much would also depend on acquiring prior intelligence on the whereabouts of the hostages.

"If they are scattered around the ship in groups, it would be very difficult for a special forces unit to guarantee their safe release," the source said. The Royal Ma-



Muhammad Chechen leader on the ferry

rine's practise parachuting into water out of Chinook helicopters when rehearsing scenarios similar to the hijacking in the Black Sea by pro-Chechen Turkish gunmen.

Britain has two specialist units capable of mounting an operation to recover a hijacked ship: the Royal Marines' Special Boat Service and the Marines' Comacchio Group which is expert in protecting North Sea oil platforms from terrorist attack. The SAS also has a special boat troop.

However, the military source said that if the hijacked vessel were moving it would be a very complex operation.

In October 1985, four Palestinian gunmen hijacked the Italian cruise liner, *Achille Lauro*, with 450 passengers and crew on board, as it steamed from the Syrian coast to Cyprus.

The terrorists threatened to kill passengers unless 50 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons were freed. The terrorists were from the Palestine Liberation Front, a splinter group that stood opposed to Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The Italians sent a squad of

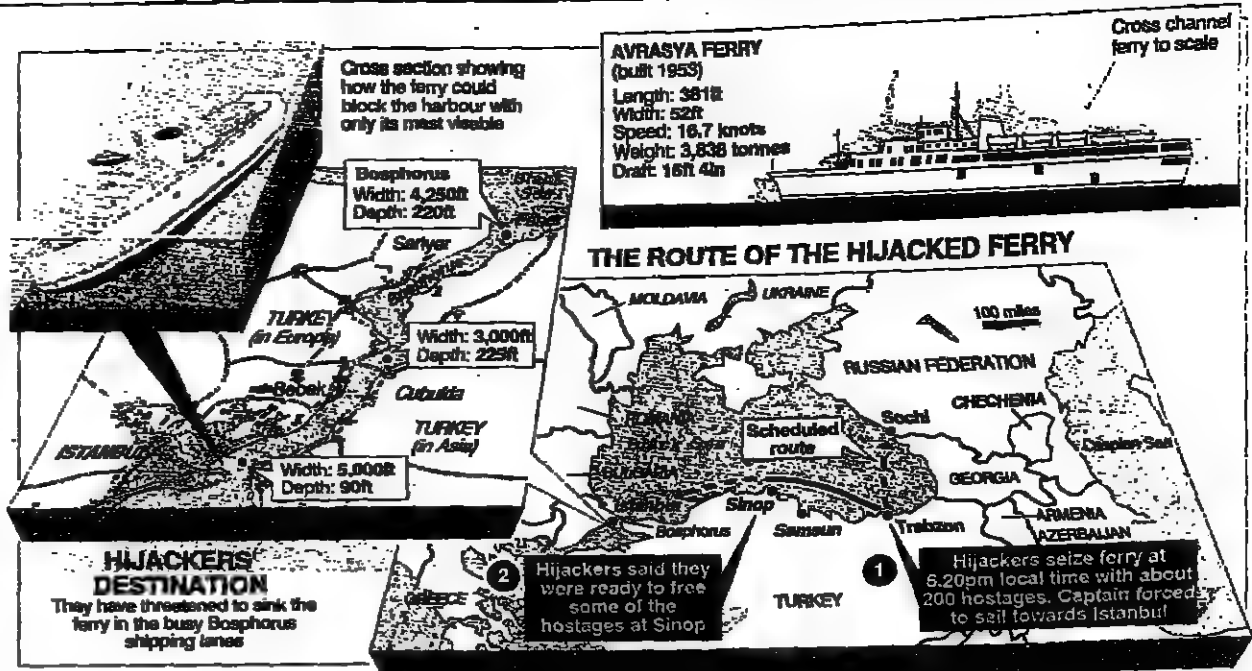
anti-terrorist commandos to Cyprus. However, the hijack was brought to a swift conclusion when the terrorists agreed to surrender to Egyptian authorities at Port Said after a day of negotiations. Before surrendering, the guerrillas killed a disabled American tourist, Leon Klinghoffer, who was shot and dumped overboard in his wheelchair.

Although the Egyptians granted them free passage, the airliner in which they were being taken from Cairo to Tunis was intercepted by six American Tomcat fighter aircraft from the carrier, *USS Saratoga*, and was forced to land at Sicily.

The mastermind behind the hijack, Mahmoud Abbas Zaidan, better known as Abu Abbas, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Front, was sentenced to life imprisonment in his absence.

In 1972, the *QE2* was held to ransom in mid-Atlantic with 1,350 passengers and 800 crew on board. Cunard, the owners, agreed to pay £140,000 after a telephone caller to its New York office said six bombs had been concealed on the ship and would be detonated if the ransom was not paid.

Four army bomb disposal experts were parachuted from

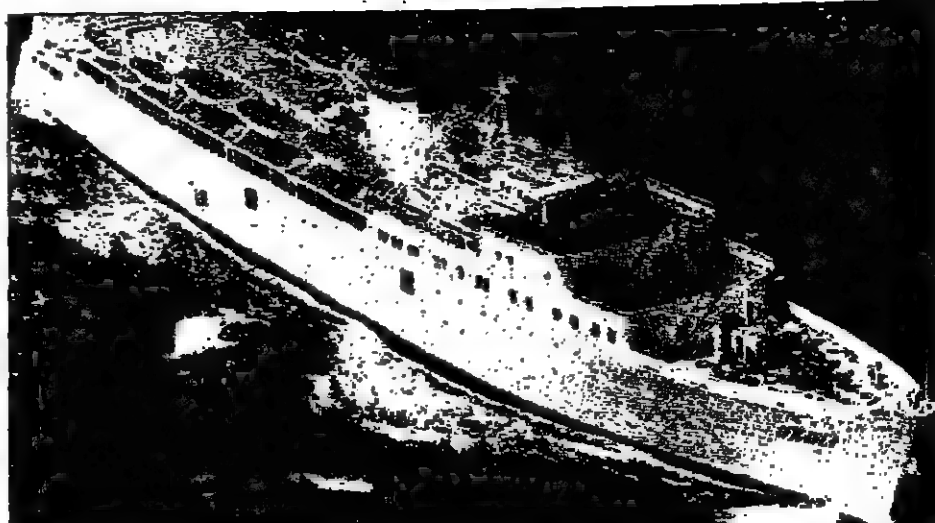


a Hercules into the Atlantic about half a mile from the *QE2*. They searched all 13 decks and nearly 1,000 cabins but found nothing.

Turkish commandos were reported yesterday to be monitoring the *Avrasya*'s progress from land and two coast guard vessels were tailing the ship. The coast guard also tried to block the vessel from leaving Trabzon harbour on Tuesday night.

□ Moscow: The hijacking has temporarily put an end to the lucrative "shop-tours", cut-rate packages to Turkey that have become popular among Russian traders who snap up Turkish clothing, food and furs for resale at home. (AP)

Leading article, page 19



Two hundred passengers and crew are being held on board the *Avrasya* ferry

Latest challenge will test survival instinct to limit

By RICHARD BRESSTON

President Yeltsin has always prided himself on the ability to survive the punishing challenges of Kremlin rule that would have long ago overcome a less robust leader.

But as the Russian President struggles to extricate himself from his latest crisis in the Caucasus it is difficult to see how the Houdini of Russian politics is planning to wriggle his way out of this trick.

With the crisis in Chechnya now in its second week, the Russian leader has five months in which to re-establish his authority and contain a conflict that has so far defeated the best efforts of his generals and diplomats.

President Yeltsin is a past master of political survival and his closest advisers claim that his best qualities always shine through when his back is against the wall. In August

1991 the Russian leader, with little more than the goodwill of the people and the courage of a small group of supporters, took on and defeated the Communist-led coup against Mikhail Gorbachev.

In October 1992 he was again challenged by hardliners on the streets of Moscow and this time revealed his ruthless instinct for survival when he put down the uprising with troops and tanks.

Even Chechnya, which President Yeltsin has described as the "biggest disappointment" of his career, has failed to topple the Russian leader as many predicted it would, when he ordered the ill-conceived assault by Russian forces on the breakaway republic more than a year ago.

In spite of initial criticism from the West and liberal opponents in Russia, the war failed to materialise as an election issue in recent parliamentary polls.

Nevertheless, like their formidable ancestors who kept the Russian Imperial Army bogged down for half a century, the Chechen rebels have proved as stubborn as their opponent in the Kremlin. Under the leadership of the mercenary, Dzhokhar Dudayev, the Chechens have withstood the full might of the Russian military and still showed no signs of giving up.

President Yeltsin has experi-

mented with various military and diplomatic options in an attempt to calm the situation in the northern Caucasus. But like some incurable virus, the Chechen bug has simply refused to go away.

The latest incidents being played out in the devastated settlement of Pervomayskoye and aboard a ferry, off the Turkish coast in the Black Sea, has served to demonstrate that whatever the Russian leader chooses, a few determined gunmen can humiliate his authority at home and even turn a small ethnic struggle into an international incident.

While Russians care little about what happens inside the small breakaway republic, they do worry when the conflict spreads to other regions and directly affects their security. In this context, the Chechen conflict becomes the latest example of the Kremlin's incompetence in dealing with domestic and foreign security issues. Not surprisingly, the need for a return to law and order

and secure borders was a cornerstone of the successful election campaign waged by the Communists in the parliamentary elections, a victory they are hoping to repeat in June's presidential race.

Mr Yeltsin has few options available that have not already been tried and found wanting. He can attempt a military solution which, given its record, would probably result in a large loss of civilian life, heavy military casualties and few gains on the ground.

He could try to restart negotiations with the Chechens although, given the recent history of failed peace talks, no one seriously believes that this is a credible solution.

His best choice is to hope that the crisis will die down over the coming weeks and that by June the whole issue will have blown over. However, that would mean taking a dangerous calculated risk. The Kremlin leader would have to take the chance that another Chechen guerrilla commander, like Salman Raduyev, the "Lone Wolf" who masterminded the latest incident, is not planning another operation to coincide with polls on June 16. By then, the great survivor of modern Russian politics will have run out of time.

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY JANUARY 18 1996

Gas regulator fuels calls for market delay

By Ross Tieman, Industrial Correspondent

THE start of competition to supply gas to 500,000 homes in the southwest of England may have to be delayed because of legitimate concerns at British Gas that technical preparations are incomplete, Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, said yesterday.

In an interview with *The Times*, Mrs Spottiswoode also forecast that the Government may decide by tomorrow whether to impose a levy on consumers to fund liabilities of more than £1 billion arising from take-or-pay gas purchase contracts signed by British Gas. Her remarks confirm the difficulties that have snared preparations to enable Britain's 18 million household gas users to choose their supplier.

Last week, Harry Moulson, a British Gas main board director and head of TransCo, its pipeline subsidiary, said that the April 1 start date for competition should be delayed until June.

Chris Rees, a Deloitte & Touche (formerly Touche Ross) consultant appointed by Ofgas to determine whether competition can still go ahead, on April 1, will report to Mrs Spottiswoode tomorrow.

An industry-wide meeting, bringing together the Department of Trade and Industry, Ofgas, the industry regulatory body, TransCo, British Gas Supply and almost 30 suppliers — rival gas suppliers, has been convened for next Tuesday to review progress.

"There is absolutely no doubt that the April 1 [target date] is very fragile," Mrs Spottiswoode said. "It is an extremely daunting timetable." She added: "I do think

TransCo has some real concerns and we should listen to them," adding: "It is better to get it right than it is to commence it [the pilot] too early and have a lot of administrative problems. I prefer to see a smooth introduction of competition."

Mrs Spottiswoode said she expects a decision about whether to defer the pilot scheme, opening up a regional market worth £160 million a

year, will be made at the last possible moment. She also feels that the two-month delay sought by British Gas might not be necessary. "It could be April 10 instead of April 1," she said.

The pilot is intended to test systems in preparation for full national competition in the household gas market by January 1, 1999.

Mrs Spottiswoode also said that she believes the Government should take powers to

Power plea

BUYERS of electricity for industry yesterday called for a delay to the full opening of the market to competition in 1998 (Christine Buckley writes). The Utility Buyers' Forum, which already buys power at competitive prices after liberalisation of the market for users of over 100kW and 100kWh, urged Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, to postpone the opening from the planned date of April 1998. The decision over where the funding will come from for the massive project has not yet been resolved.

The DTI has urged gas producers to renegotiate the contracts with British Gas but not at a substantial loss. Mrs Spottiswoode believes the losses and liabilities could threaten the financial viability of British Gas, and that a levy may prove the last resort if producers fail to agree price cuts to the former monopoly.

But she said that levy powers would be a "double-edged sword" that might make it more difficult for British Gas to renegotiate gas purchase arrangements with its suppliers.

The head of Ofgas said that unless the DTI wrote a levy provision into the licences now, primary legislation could be needed in the future to resolve British Gas's difficulties over take-or-pay contracts stretching decades ahead and covering the purchase of gas worth £40 billion.

British Gas, because of the rate at which it is losing its market to rivals, no longer needs all the gas it has contracted to buy. Yet, under the terms of the contracts, it must pay North Sea producers, whether or not the gas is used.

The company is unable to sell surplus gas to its rivals because the spot price of gas has slumped to around 10p a therm, less than half of the 20p average that British Gas is paying.

The DTI has urged gas producers to renegotiate the contracts with British Gas but not at a substantial loss. Mrs Spottiswoode believes the losses and liabilities could threaten the financial viability of British Gas, and that a levy may prove the last resort if producers fail to agree price cuts to the former monopoly.

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Complications, page 29



Time for reflection: Clare Spottiswoode making a point during yesterday's interview

Earnings boost for rate cut hopes

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

KENNETH CLARKE, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, met yesterday for their monthly interest rate discussion armed with new evidence that wage pressures remain subdued.

Annual growth in average earnings remained at 3.25 per cent in November, the fifth month in a row at that level. The City had been expecting a rise to 3.5 per cent and argued that the news removes yet another hurdle to lower rates.

Mr Clarke and Mr George met yesterday afternoon for an hour and, while a minority in the City believes a rate cut could be announced today, most think it is too soon after rates were cut by a quarter point in December.

A picture of sluggish economic growth was backed up by news of a 7,900 fall in unemployment in December, one of the smallest monthly falls in recent months.

The only worrying sign for inflation was news of a pick up in unit labour costs, which were up 4 per cent year on year in the three months ended November. This is because manufacturing output has been slowing but employment rising, leading to a fall in productivity and a rise in unit labour costs. However, weaker output is also depressing factory gate prices, which is crucially important to future retail price inflation.

Also announced was a £1 billion public sector borrowing requirement for December. This was higher than the City had expected but was largely due to a change in the timing of interest payments. Most economists believe that the PSBR is on track to meet the Government's full-year forecast of £29 billion.

The City is now eagerly awaiting today's figures for retail prices and retail sales.

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FT-SE 100	3704.2	(-6.4)
Yield	3.88%	
FT-SE All-Share	1811.80	(-2.44)
Nasdaq	20570.26	(+3.18)
New York		
Dow Jones	5082.44	(-5.78)
S&P Composite	608.56	(+0.52)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)
Yield	6.04%	(6.07%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	8 1/4%	(8 1/4%)
12-mth Interbank	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)

STERLING

New York	1.5288	(1.5350)
London	1.5245	(1.5375)
DM	2.2355	(2.2435)
FF	7.5380	(7.5700)
SP	1.6058	(1.6058)
Yen	160.76	(162.57)
£ Index	83.2	(83.4)

US \$ DOLLAR

London	1.4863	(1.4857)
DM	5.0055	(5.0095)
FF	1.1838	(1.1825)
Yen	105.35	(105.37)
£ Index	82.4	(82.2)

TOKYO CLOSE YEN 108.13

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$16.80	(unq)
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GOLD

London close	\$377.48	(\$377.00)
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* denotes midday trading price

Lloyds talks

Britain's second largest chemists may soon be in new hands after revealing that it is in talks with a potential buyer. Lloyds Chemists, which also owns the Holland & Barratt health food chain, said it was talking to one interested party with whom it has been in discussion for some time. Lloyds shares rose in the discussions sent the share price up 75p to 306p. Page 27

Bank worries

The relationship between banks and small businesses still has scope for improvement. Page 30

Forte battle enters its final throes

By Eric Renshaw

THE decisive moment in the battle for Forte comes tomorrow, when both Forte and Granada hold their final meeting with Mercury Asset Management, the fund manager whose support is considered crucial to the bid's outcome.

MAM owns about 15 per cent of Forte, making it the single largest shareholder of the hotels and restaurants group. Forte's chances of remaining independent will be considerably weakened unless it can convince MAM that Granada's £3.8 billion offer does not adequately reflect Forte's potential future value.

Granada yesterday bought another 8.5 million Forte shares, paying 384p apiece, to raise its stake to 9.9 per cent. The Forte family owns approximately 8 per cent of Forte, but its management hopes to retain many of the individual shareholders.

Leading article, page 19

Tesco leads the winners over the festive period

By Sarah Bagdall

MIXED news emerged from the high street yesterday on trading over the festive period with Tesco claiming it had enjoyed its finest Christmas, while Body Shop issued a surprise profit warning.

Tesco lifted like-for-like sales by 8.5 per cent in the 20 weeks to December 30 and by 10 per cent in the four weeks leading up to the new year. Sir Ian MacLaurin, Tesco chairman, said: "This was the best Christmas we have ever had. This reflects the success of Clubcard as well as our Christmas range." The company's shares suffered from news of price pledges from B&Q and Shell that threaten to erode Tesco's petrol sales. The shares slipped 7 1/2p to 308p.

The Body Shop, the eco-friendly cosmetics group, reported flat like-for-like sales in the ten weeks to December 30. It blamed the difficult retail climate in the US, reflected in



MacLaurin: delighted

a 7 per cent drop in like-for-like sales in the US, for a warning that pre-tax profits for the year to February were expected to fall slightly short of last year's £3.5 million. The shares were 1p down at 151p.

Kingfisher, the Comet to Woolworths group, revealed strong sales in some parts of its empire. Overall sales jumped 8.8 per cent in the ten

weeks to January 6 and like-for-like sales rose 3.9 per cent. Woolworths and Comet sales were offset by falls at B&Q and Darty. The 7.5 per cent advance at Woolworths removed any vestige of concern that the chain would suffer a repeat of the previous year's profit warning. Kingfisher's share rose 9p to 538p.

Alders, the department store and international duty-free retailer, fared similarly. In the 15 weeks to January 13, the department stores mustered an 8.5 per cent advance in sales and a 1 per cent rise in like-for-like sales. Duty-free sales leapt 45 per cent. Shares rose 3p to 176p.

The use of credit and debit cards by British consumers reached a record-breaking £7.9 billion in December, up a huge 20 per cent from last Christmas, according to the Credit Card Research Group.

Loyalty card, page 26
Tempos, page 28

Finance panel overhaul

By Ross Tieman

THE Private Finance Panel, which advises the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, on his plans to replace £14 billion of public spending with private sector projects, is being overhauled in an effort to give the initiative new impetus.

Ten members of the 16-strong panel are stepping down, while only three new recruits will join. They are Glen Folwell, finance director of the Halifax Building Society; Robin Fox, vice-chairman of merchant bank Kleinwort Benson Group; and Alastair Ross Goobey, chief executive of Hermes Pensions Management.

Seven members of the new nine-person panel will each take responsibility for oversight of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects within a particular ministry. Among those leaving the panel are Howard Davies, the deputy governor of the Bank of England.

Timetable for European bank 'not viable'

By Patricia Tehan, Banking Correspondent



Tugendhat: pro-European

A EUROPEAN central bank is unworkable under current economic and political conditions in Europe and should be postponed. To suggest that the 1999 single currency timetable is viable "flies in the face of the facts", according to Lord Tugendhat, a former European Commissioner.

Lord Tugendhat, a staunch pro-European and chairman of Abbey National, Britain's fifth biggest bank, cast doubt over the likely success of the central bank proposal at a dinner in London last night, the first time a senior British banker has publicly attacked the proposals.

He said that among the most important objectives of the proposed European central bank "is that it should maintain a

greater degree of monetary stability within the participating states as a group than could otherwise be achieved". To do that, decisions must be made that are "often painful and unpopular". Such decisions affect "not just markets but jobs, the prosperity of many people and the profits, even the existence of individual firms", he said.

The institution charged with making such decisions had to be able to act quickly and decisively "and its decisions must be fully and simultaneously implemented throughout the jurisdiction to which they apply". But Lord Tugendhat said it was questionable whether European Union institutions, such as a central bank, at the present time or for the next few years "will enjoy the moral and practical authority required to carry such responsibilities".

He also said that the current record of implementation and observance of EU rules in member states "can best be described as patchy".

Lord Tugendhat said that he was in favour of single currency and of a European central bank, but only when conditions were right. This meant extending the scope of the single market, ensuring that the economies of member states are in underlying equilibrium, seeing that there is sustained growth, seeing that there would not be a negative effect on employment across member states, and ensuring that public opinion is clearly in favour of the move.

Lord Tugendhat added: "It is more important to get it right than to meet an arbitrary deadline. This timetable is not reasonable and it does not reflect the underlying realities."



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Loyalty Visa launched by Budgens

By Sarah Bagnall

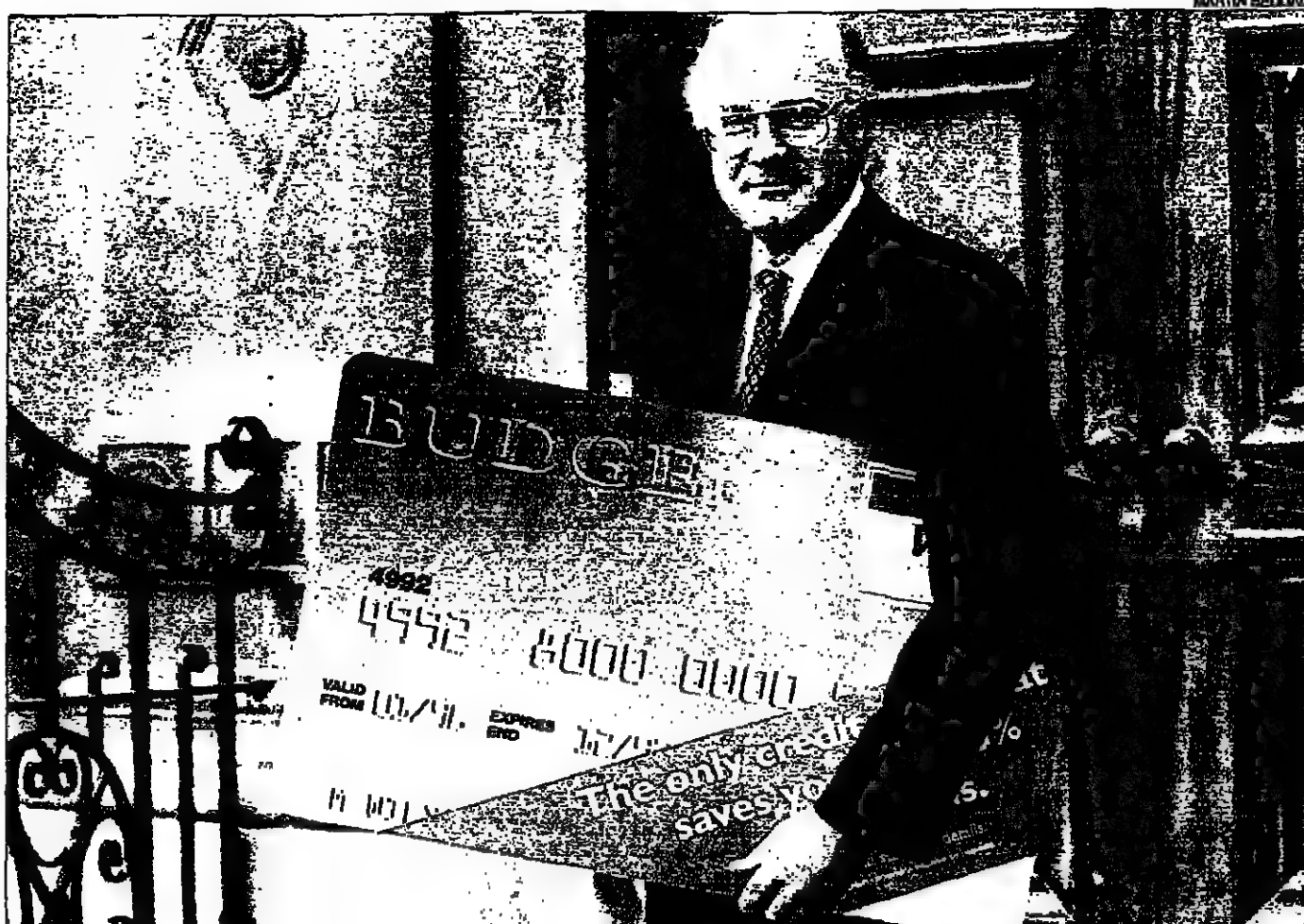
BUDGENS, the South East-based food retailer, yesterday launched a loyalty card with a difference — a Visa card.

John von Spreckelsen, chief executive, said: "It is a unique card. It has features that make it far superior to anything else in the market."

Launched in conjunction with The Associates, an American finance organisation owned by the Ford Group, the Budgens Visa card is unusual in that users can still accrue points if they shop at rival supermarket groups but use their Budgens card to pay.

Mr von Spreckelsen said the initial target audience for the card was the group's one million shoppers. Currently only 26 per cent of its customers use cards, Budgens is not incurring any of the costs of the card and as a result the scheme will not dilute earnings.

The news came as Budgens revealed a rise in pre-tax profits from £900,000 to £1.3 million in the 28 weeks to November 12, helped by the group abandoning Penny Markets, the loss-incurring discount venture. This helped to lift gross margins, while the replacement format, Freshave, helped to lift sales. Sales rose from £150.1 million to £162.6 million and like-for-like sales rose 4.5 per cent. The interim dividend, due April 11, was up for the first time in several years, from 0.3p to 0.35p, and is payable out of earnings of 2.1p (0.4p). Shares rose 1p to 34½p.



John von Spreckelsen, chief executive, with a mock-up of the Budgens Visa card which also rewards customers for loyalty

Pru falls as rivals' sales increase

By Marianne Curphy

THREE of the UK's major life companies showed gains in new business during 1995 while the Prudential's sales fell 8 per cent during what it described as a "difficult" year.

Sales of annual premium life and pension products at the Prudential, the UK's biggest insurance company, both fell 8 per cent to £244 million and £2,027 billion respectively as the public remained reluctant to buy pensions and life products after the mis-selling scandal.

Worldwide, annual sales were down 3 per cent to £500 million and single premium sales down 11 per cent to £4.7 billion in the year to December 31.

While the fall throughout the industry was an average 15 per cent in 1995, General Accident, which assumed control of the pensions provider Provident Mutual on January 1, reported a 53 per cent increase in total new premiums.

Scottish Life unveiled increases in group and individual pensions business but a drop in mortgage sales, and Scottish Widows reported total new premium income up 44 per cent to £1,005 billion.

The value of General Accident's new business reached a record £936 million, comprising £894 million of new single premiums and £42.3 million of new annual premiums.

General Accident admitted that several hundred staff out of 3,200 employed by General Accident Life after its takeover of Provident Mutual could be shed under restructuring plans. Peter Hales, assistant general manager, said 100 jobs had already gone.

Whitehall concedes rate of jobless fall is slowing

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

THE Government now recognises that the downward trend in unemployment is declining. This was made clear by Whitehall officials yesterday when they announced a further, but lower than expected, fall of 7,400 in the number out of work and claiming benefit.

Ministers claimed the decline was "clear evidence" of the success of the Government's economic policies, though opposition leaders warned the figures meant a looming return of recession.

New figures published by the Central Statistical Office confirmed the blunder by Michael Heseltine, Deputy

Prime Minister, who disclosed the 28th successive monthly fall in unemployment a day too soon. Though headline, unadjusted unemployment actually rose by 32,078 to 2,228,214 in December, after being seasonally adjusted figures seen as the best guide to the trend in unemployment showed a 7,900 fall to 2,236,900 — 8 per cent of the workforce and a four-and-a-half-year low.

Seasonally-adjusted unemployment fell for men and women, but rose in Scotland, where even on an adjusted basis it went up by 800. Statisticians stuck to their

belief that the likely monthly fall in unemployment remains 10-15,000, though they produced figures to show that since unemployment fell from its peak in December 1992 — it is now down 741,600 since then — the rate of decrease is clearly declining.

In 1993, unemployment fell by 16,500 a month, by a monthly average of 33,100 in 1994 and by 15,100 a month in 1995. Over the past six months it has fallen by an average of 12,800, and over the past three by 9,500 before last month's fall of 7,900. A Whitehall statistician said: "There are signs that the downward trend

has been declining since 1994." Last month's figures rose because more people were joining the unemployment count and fewer people left it. The flow of people joining the count rose by 2,200 to 295,800 while the number of people leaving it dropped by 8,500 to 305,000.

Separate figures from the Government's quarterly Labour Force Survey showed a 7,000 rise in the number of claimants unemployed, as measured on the internationally-accepted ILO basis, though Whitehall officials insisted that the increase was largely a "sampling fluctuation" and should not be given undue significance. ILO unemployment in the autumn quarter fell by 15,000 to 2.4 million.

At the same time, the stock of vacancies at JobCentres fell by 3,400 in the month to December, and placings into jobs fell by 700.

Ministers denied any significance in the lower-than-expected fall in claimant unemployment. Eric Forth, Education and Employment minister, said: "Figures will inevitably fluctuate from month to month." But Labour said the "small drop masks the growing evidence of a return to recession".

John Monks, TUC General Secretary, said the figures showed that the "recovery is beginning to peter out", and called on Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, to cut interest rates immediately.

Figures from the CDO showed a big increase in days lost through industrial action last November — up to 69,000 over the month compared to 24,000 in October and just 17,000 in November 1994.

Lloyd's to insist on 'passport' to work

By Graham Seargeant, Financial Editor

LLOYD'S of London's regulators are to authorise individual market professionals for the first time. David Gittings, who succeeded Rosalind Gilmore as head of regulation, said that tests applied would include competence, as shown for instance by a manager's underwriting record.

The drive for individual passports to work at the insurance market is part of a plan to make regulation more like that under the Financial Services Act. Sir Alan Hardcastle, chairman of Lloyd's Regulatory Board, unveiled the first annual regulatory plan yesterday. He said that openness was one of the main recommendations of the review by Miss Gilmore.

Authorising individuals to trade depends on agreeing a code of business conduct, similar to those promoted by the Securities and Investments Board. Sir Alan hopes to complete the code this month.

Sir Alan said that authorisation would initially apply to between 4,000 and 6,000 key individuals in agencies, mostly directors and underwriting managers. Mr Gittings hopes to process these within a year of people having to apply, probably in the Spring. No time has been set for authorisation to be needed to trade, but Sir Alan insisted that existing professionals would not automatically qualify, saying: "Some will have to leave or will not apply."

The board will also monitor firms more often, streamline disciplinary procedures, make firms liable for employees and bring in a tariff of fines for minor failings.

Pennington, page 27

Partial settlement over Exxon disaster

EXXON, the world's largest oil company, has reached a partial settlement of \$300 million in its suit against Lloyd's of London and other underwriters over the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, which resulted in a \$5 billion punitive fine in 1994. The suit sought to recover insurance for part of Exxon's expenses as cargo owner. The Exxon Valdez supertanker spilled 11 million gallons of oil, polluting 1,500 miles of shoreline.

Lee Raymond, Exxon chairman, said he was "pleased" with the partial settlement but added that the company still has "substantial insurance claims pending with Lloyd's and other underwriters". Exxon said a trial date, set for April 8, has been planned in the State District of Harris County, Texas, to address those claims. Exxon also yesterday settled a \$3.5 million deal over thousands of miscellaneous damages claims that could help to speed up payouts by the company, although plaintiffs believe settlement could still take years.

Intel disappoints

INTEL, the world's largest microchip maker, reported a surge in earnings and revenues for the final quarter of last year but failed to match Wall Street's expectations and raised fears of a slowdown in computer sales this year. The company, which is seen as a bellwether for the computer industry, said revenues rose 42 per cent to \$4.58 billion, while earnings doubled to \$867 million, or 98 cents a share. Analysts, who had been expecting about \$1.12 per share, were disappointed. The gloom deepened when Intel said revenues were unlikely to grow during the next few months.

US report hurts Medeva

SHARES of Medeva, the pharmaceuticals company, fell more than 5 per cent yesterday, to 299p, after the US Food and Drug Administration reported that the company's leading drug can cause cancer tumours in some mice. The drug, methylphenidate, which is used to treat hyperactivity in children, caused liver tumours in male mice fed 30 times the normal dose for two years. Medeva said it did not expect the results to reduce the sales of the drug significantly. Analysts downplayed fears that the FDA report would be damaging. They noted that the FDA still recommends the drug.

BET wins pension case

A HIGH COURT test case on pension rights brought by 11 "dinner ladies" and affecting 3,000 former part-time employees of Lancashire County Council was yesterday decided in favour of employers. Judge Robert Walker ruled that BET Catering Services was entitled not to accept the women, who had worked for the council and been members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, into its company scheme because they earned under £15,000 a year. The ruling means that under EC law firms taking over state services, or the assets of a business, need not provide pension benefits for transferring employees.

Greene King sells shops

GREENE KING has largely bailed out of wine retailing, blaming the increasing role of supermarkets and the boom in cross-channel drink imports, with the sale of 21 shops to Victoria Wine. A spokeswoman for the regional brewer said it had suffered a steady decline in the business of the chain of Thos. Peatling wine merchants in East Anglia and would now focus on mail order sales, keeping just three of the stores open. She said the brewer had seen a falling off in retail sales over the past few years. No price has been disclosed for the deal.

BankAmerica boost

BANKAMERICA, the second largest bank in the US, reported strong growth in earnings for the fourth quarter of last year from \$591 million to \$704 million. Earnings were \$1.74 a share, up from \$1.41 a year ago and compared with estimates of around \$1.68. For the whole year, earnings rose from \$2.1 billion to \$2.2 billion, in line with the strong performance of most US banks over the same period. BankAmerica said its lending had risen by 10 per cent and non-interest income was also up on the previous year.

SFA silent on probe

THE Securities and Futures Authority, the watchdog for brokers and futures dealers, yesterday declined to confirm or deny mounting City speculation that two companies within the Winchester Commodities Group — Winchester Brokerage and Winchester Asset Management — are being investigated for alleged rule breaches. However, the SFA did confirm that the two companies were registered as members, as is Charles Vincent, one of the directors of the group.

British Gas buys fields

BRITISH GAS has bought a £20 million portfolio of gas fields and licences to explore for oil and gas in Italy from Fiat, the carmaker. Some three million cubic feet of gas a year will continue to be pumped to Fiat to fuel its car and other engineering plants. However, British Gas plans to explore for oil in the southern Apennines, where large oil deposits have been found by other companies. Fiat and British Gas already have a joint venture to install and operate gas-burning combined heat and electricity plants in Fiat factories. Complications, page 29

Nynex optimistic

NYNEX CableComms, the second largest cable company, reported yesterday that its cable-television penetration increased from 19.8 per cent to 24.6 per cent in the quarter to December 31. Cable-television penetration, however, rose only marginally to 19.8 per cent. A spokesman said that the company is "disappointed" with television penetration, but expects a renewed marketing effort, including a national advertising campaign in March, to lift the figure. Annual earnings will be released next month.

MPs to debate Rom Data

MPs are to hold a full-scale debate next week on how £850,000 of taxpayers' money was poured into a West Country computer firm when one of the directors had a troubled financial history (Robert Miller writes).

The DTI yesterday confirmed that an investigation into how DTI officials failed to run checks and discover that John Dawson, a former director of Rom Data Corporation of Falmouth, a former discharged bankrupt, has been completed.

Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, has promised MPs that he will reveal the results of the report to MPs and could do so during the debate next Wednesday.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Rate
Australia \$	216	2.00
Austria S	18.85	15.23
Belgium F	49.24	44.94
Canada C	2.208	2.048
Cyprus Cyp	0.750	0.685
Denmark Kr	8.31	8.51
France F	6.55	6.10
Germany Dm	2.41	2.20
Greece Dr	350.00	325.00
Hong Kong S	12.51	11.51
India Rupee	1.00	0.94
Italy Lira	5,160	4,540
Japan Yen	253.00	234.00
Netherlands Gld	177.10	161.10
New Zealand \$	2.41	2.20
Portugal Esc	204.00	184.00
Spain Ptas	166.64	153.36
Sweden Kr	10.66	10.00
Switzerland F	1.95	1.77
Taiwan NT\$	166.64	153.36
USA \$	1.00	1.00

Rates for all denominations bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank plc. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

PUBLIC NOTICES

BRANLEY, BRANLEY & CO. LTD. (INCORPORATED IN ENGLAND) has been placed in liquidation. The liquidator is Mr. J. H. BRANLEY, of 1, The Quadrant, London, W1. All claims against the company should be sent to him by 15th February 1996.

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In the High Court of Justice, Chancery Division, London.
In the matter of the estate of **BRANLEY, BRANLEY & CO. LTD.** (INCORPORATED IN ENGLAND) which was placed in liquidation by the order of the Court dated 15th January 1996.
I, **Mr. J. H. BRANLEY**, of 1, The Quadrant, London, W1, do hereby give notice that I have been appointed liquidator of the above company.

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Blinder leaving Fed

Advocate of lower US rates to quit

ALAN BLINDER, Deputy Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and a strong advocate of lower US interest rates, is to step down when his term of office expires at the end of this month.

Mr Blinder's departure will remove the chief supporter at the Fed of a more relaxed monetary policy. In late 1994, and over the past few months, he has argued that the softening of the US economy required lower interest rates to avoid the risk of recession.

His view has increasingly gained ground at the Fed and most economists now expect the central bank to cut the rate by about half a percentage point at its next meeting on January 30.

Mr Blinder's departure virtually ensures that the top Fed appointments remain in the hands of Republican sympathisers. Mr Blinder was President Bill Clinton's most influential appointee at the Fed and when he was appointed two years ago was touted as a possible successor to Alan Greenspan as chairman.

However, the Republican majority in Congress appears to have put paid to that. Mr Greenspan's second four-year term expires in March but he



Greenspan: 'staying on'

is widely expected to be reappointed by the President, even though he was originally a Republican appointee.

Mr Blinder, an academic from Princeton University and a lifelong Keynesian, often drew criticism from Wall Street for his willingness to tolerate a degree of inflation to keep the economy growing.

His departure leaves two vacancies on the seven-member Fed board, which the President must fill. It is doubtful, however, whether Mr Clinton will be able to get Congressional approval for anyone who shares Mr Blinder's economic views.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Investors take a rest as rate cut fails to appear

INVESTORS decided to take a breather after Tuesday's sharp gains with both equities and government securities giving up early gains.

There was no sign of the expected cut in interest rates after the monthly economic meeting between Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Eddie Sheehy, Governor of the Bank of England. Investors are still high that a further softening in rates will be signalled in the short term.

Certainly, share prices had a tired look about them last night as the FT-SE 100 index saw an early 12-point lead reversed before ending 6.4 lower at 3,704.2.

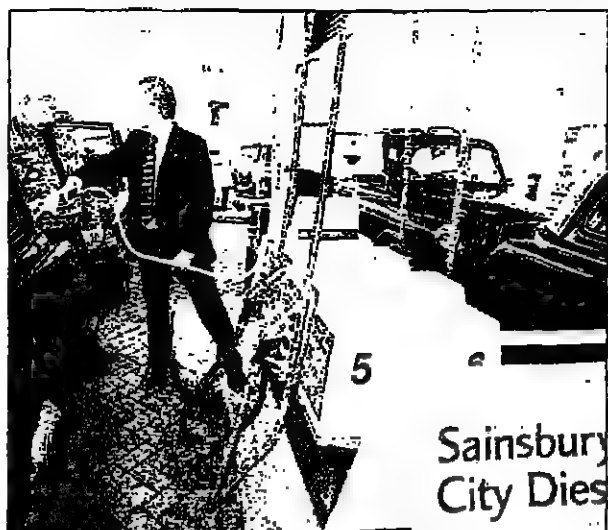
Investors have paid the price for a bad case of wishful thinking in shares of British Gas recently. They have outperformed the market 13 per cent during the past month in the hope that a quick solution could be found to the unprofitable gas supply contract.

But Ofgas, the industry regulator, has thrown a spanner in the works by making it clear that it will not be distracted from its review of the company's gas pipeline business by any problems being suffered over gas supply contracts.

The British Gas share price reacted to the comments with a fall of 12p at 253.4p as turnover in the shares reached more than 33 million.

News of a bid approach at Lloyds Chemists sent the shares soaring 7p to 366p. It came as little surprise to the City, which has been predicting such a move for months. At these levels, the group is capitalised at £437 million. In the past, its name has been linked with rival Boots, down 5p at 596p, and several supermarket chains, including Tesco and Asda, favourite in the frame now is UniChem, down 10p at 239p.

Tesco moved quickly to deny the rumours linking it with Lloyds Chemists. This came as it gave a rundown of Christmas trading showing a 15.4 per cent rise in sales during the 20 weeks up to December 30. Like-for-like sales were 8.5 per cent ahead. Much of the achievement came on the back of its loyalty card scheme which paid out more than £25 million. But the shares failed to benefit, losing 7.5p to 308p on news of the petrol price rise announced by Shell and Esso.



Sainsbury shares fell on news of Esso's petrol price cut

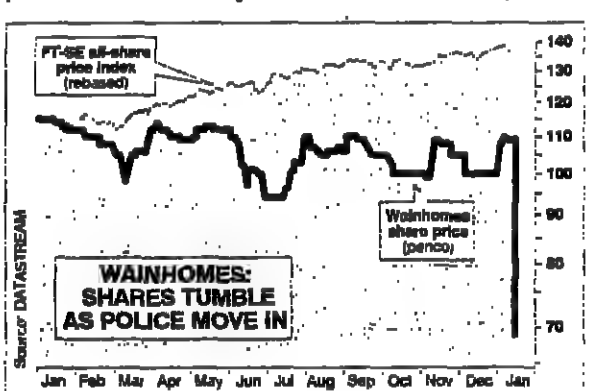
Both companies have announced cuts of up to 20p a gallon which is set to hit the likes of independent garage operators like Frost, which reacted with a fall of 10p to 171p. The news of a petrol price war also hit the other big supermarket chains that sell petrol, with J Sainsbury down 6.5p at 417p, Argill, off 8.5p at 348p, and Asda, 2.5p

a 10 per cent rise in sales, but there was no growth in like-for-like sales. Kingfisher responded to positive trading news with a jump of 9p to 538p. Group sales in the ten weeks to January 6 were up almost 4 per cent. The one black mark was its B&Q subsidiary which saw sales dip 3 per cent in a depressed marketplace.

Shares in TBI, the property investment and development company, firmed 2.5p to 58p, after Credit Lyonnais Laing issued a buy recommendation. CLL expects TBI, which owns Cardiff airport and recently made a £42.9 million recommended bid for Molyneux Estates, to be the top performing property share in 1996.

Wainhomes, the housebuilder, with the price plunging 4p to 28p, a fall of almost 38 per cent, after it emerged that the Fraud Squad was looking at the company's affairs. The group has also issued a profits warning claiming that profitability for the year is likely to be materially below current market expectations.

The biggest fall on the day was seen in Wainhomes, the housebuilder, with the price plunging 4p to 28p, a fall of almost 38 per cent, after it emerged that the Fraud Squad was looking at the company's affairs. The group has also issued a profits warning claiming that profitability for the year is likely to be materially below current market expectations.



Brokers had been looking for a final figure of £8.2 million, compared with £10 million the previous year. Wainhomes was floated at 170p in October 1994.

Medeva fell 14p to 259p after the US and Food Drug Administration indicated that tests on rats with the group's methylphenidate drug indicated that it may cause cancer. Methylphenidate is used to treat hyperactivity.

Photo-Me International, the photo-booth operator, fell 8p to 125p after issuing a profits warning. An expected improvement in profits during the second half had failed to materialise and would result in a short-fall of between 5 per cent and 10 per cent on the year. Pre-tax profits at the half year stage were just ahead at £10.1 million.

Stanley Leisure is like any other bookmaker - it found the going difficult after the introduction of the National Lottery. Half-year profits fell from £6.1 million to £1.5 million in what Leonard Steinberg, chairman, described as the worst six months in racing he could remember. The shares also trailed in with a fall of 12p to 341p. Bingo is also being hit by the lottery and that left Rank Organisation 9p down at 44p.

GILT-EDGED: The London market attempted to extend Tuesday's sharp gains in early trading still looking for a cut in interest rates. But selling pressure reported on overseas bond markets soon spilled over with prices moving into negative territory later in the day. However, London did manage to put in a late surge, outperforming German bunds as they closed off the bottom.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt reduced the fall on the day to just three ticks finishing at £111.12 1/2 in hectic trading that saw 94,000 contracts completed.

In the cash market, Treasury 8 per cent 2013 lost five ticks at £103.16, while at the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 lost one tick to £105.4. Index-linked issues managed to shrug off the previous day's disappointing performance to finish 4.5 better. In NEW YORK, a rally by high-tech shares produced a large fall in the Dow Jones industrial average. At midday, it was 5.78 points down at 5,052.44.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	Dow Jones 5044.44 (-5.78)
S&P Composite	608.90 (-0.52)
Tokyo:	Nikkei Average 2571.26 (+1.19)
Hong Kong:	Hang Seng 10993.52 (-77.53)
Amsterdam:	EOE Index 505.00 (+0.44)
Sydney:	ASX 2280.3 (+5.2)
Frankfurt:	DAX 2371.30 (+5.57)
Singapore:	Strait 2290.06 (-1.77)
Brussels:	General 8783.16 (+47.10)
Paris:	CAC-40 1986.00 (+1.50)
Zurich:	SIX Gen 724.30 (-2.58)
London:	FT 30 2753.3 (-7.4)
FT 100	3304.2 (-0.4)
FTSE Mid 250	1735.0 (-1.1)
FT-SE 250	1837.9 (-2.4)
FT-SE 100	1525.34 (+2.4)
FT-SE 100	181.50 (-1.4)
FT Non Financials	1914.68 (-3.87)
FT Fixed Interest	114.07 (-0.33)
FT Govt Secs	95.97 (-0.01)
SEQA Volume	773,000
USM (Interim)	180.71 (+0.03)
USM 2000	2,200.00
German Mark	2,230.00 (-0.0078)
Exchange Index	83.2 (-0.2)
Bank of England official close (HPR)	5.00
ESCU	1.2486
RPI	149.8 Nov (3.1%) Jan 1997=100
RPIX	149.8 Nov (2.9%) Jan 1997=100

RECENT ISSUES

Century Inns	115
Cox Insurance	113
Crown Products	85
Dmarte	72
Jupiter Spitz Cap	85
Jupiter Spitz Inc	85
Jupiter Spitz Units	85
Mounica	7
Northern Petroleum	76
Nihm Palm Wrs	8
Revelation Plc	101
Rushmore Wynne	3
Sleypharma 8 Wrs	24
Unicom Ind (13)	146
Vietnam	249
Viewinn	135
Western Selection Ws	2

RIGHTS ISSUES

Eleco Hldgs n/p (28)	1
Eleco n/p (28)	25
Ransomes n/p (48)	7
SWP Group n/p (21)	1
Seaford Res n/p (65)	7
Sleypharma n/p (4)	4
Suicite Spk n/p (25)	3
Westbury n/p (150)	28
Western Select n/p (14)	4

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:	
Lloyds Chemist	386p (+75p)
Tesco	308p (+10p)
MAJ:	
Corporation	205p (+12p)
Azian	524p (+25p)
Eve Group	210p (+10p)
IBC	286p (+13p)
FALLS:	
Wainhomes	88p (-41p)
TIG	111p (-10p)
From Group	171p (-10p)
First Leisure	349p (-14p)
Medeva	259p (-14p)
Micro Focus	803p (-30p)
British Gas	255p (-12p)
Chromacore	310p (-13p)
UniChem	239p (-10p)
Mile	381p (-14p)

Closing Prices Page 32

TEMPUS

Small catch for Kingfisher

KINGFISHER produced a sprinkling of good news yesterday which pleased the market but nothing that could yet justify a re-rating. Comet appears to have addressed the appalling stock management problem that has held back its sales. Add to that a little trimming of the gross margin and the electrical retailer enjoyed a badly-needed sales boost. Woolworths also benefited from better stock control and keen pricing, allowing it to hold its ground against the seasonal onslaught from other big retailers, such as Argos.

A modest overall sales advance in real terms and the expectation of a return to profit at Comet should be enough to keep the wolves from boardroom door at Kingfisher although the performance of B&Q is disturbingly weak.

Dary is expected to recover quickly from the French strikes and there are hopes of major

sales gains from the introduction of PCs to its range. However, the focus on Kingfisher's French operation poses a question about the rationale for its own market leaders as their sales need to own a share in a collection of second-rate assets with no commonality. In Dary, Kingfisher has a premier retailer and B&Q, despite a weak Christmas, arguably meets that criterion.

Elsewhere Kingfisher falls down with Superdrug, respectable but second-tier chemist and Comet recovering from losses. Woolworths is the biggest conundrum; a good competitor in provincial high streets but outclassed in city centres. Kingfisher cannot afford to buy its way out of trouble; the cost of good retailing assets would depress its rate of return. The path ahead remains stony and

Lloyds Chems.

A TAKEOVER OF Lloyds Chemists would offer shareholders the happy prospect of a decent return without waiting for the company to sort out its loss-making Superdrug drugstores. Lloyds took a hefty £13 million provision last March to close 100 outlets and transform the remainder into new formats. Profits before the exceptional charge were flat and the market is expecting meagre earnings growth this year. The share price has gradually recovered but there will be little resistance to an offer from UniChem - the widely rumoured suitor.

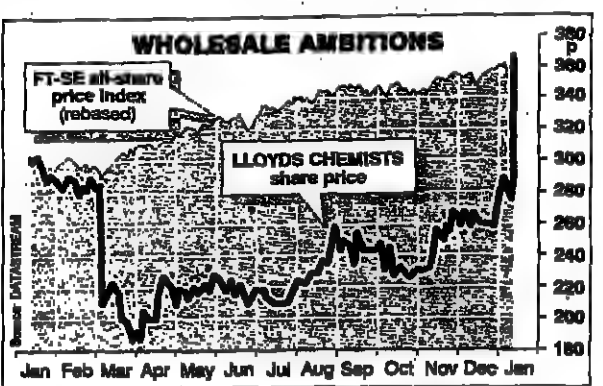
A bid at 350p would give shareholders an exit multiple of about 12 times current year earnings, hardly exciting but Lloyds is not a Boots. Price could prove to be a

problem for UniChem

which would face a huge goodwill writedown on a bid worth £425 million, roughly the size of UniChem itself. That implies a big cash call if the company is to avoid a huge deficit in its balance sheet.

For UniChem, Lloyds would provide a unique opportunity to build up its retail chain by adding 1,000

outlets to its existing 400 stores. However, wholesaling could prove problematic. UniChem and Gehe, the German group which bought A&A last year, both have 30 per cent of the market as the Department of Health might object to the removal of the No. 3 wholesaler. An MMC reference seems likely.



Tesco

TESCO's star continues to rise. Nothing like for-like sales growth of 10 per cent over Christmas and 8.5 per cent in the first 20 weeks of the second half is no mean feat.

Market conditions remain tough and show little signs of easing. To gain ground the chains have to win custom from their rivals, a battle Tesco is winning. In the space of a year, its market share has risen from 16.6 per cent to 18.5 per cent in December. In contrast, Sainsbury's share slipped from 17.7 per cent to 17.1 per cent.

Tesco's sales growth has been helped by both Clubcard, which added a couple of points, and inflation of 4.5 per cent, factors which raise concern about the group's ability to maintain the momentum. Clubcard's first anniversary is next month and future like-for-like advances will be harder to achieve.

Aggressive price pledges

announced yesterday by Esso and Shell raise the prospect of reduced profits from Tesco's petrol sales. Of the supermarkets, Tesco is the biggest petrol retailer but the business only accounts for about £100 million of gross profits before costs.

There is also a question mark over Tesco's management transition; the partnership of Terry Leaky and David Reid is as yet untested. But these are quibbles which fail to justify Tesco's discount to the sector.

First Leisure

THOSE groovy chaps at First Leisure have an unerring ability to spot the nation's leisure habits. While middle of the road music venues and multiplex-style wine bars and bowling sound purgatory to some, it is clearly pariahs to others. The company has now logged 13 straight years of profit increases in what is often a fickle

business. First Leisure is one of the few companies in the sector not whinging about the National Lottery. The company would like changes in the law but sees its main task in tempting loose change away from lottery scratch cards and into its bingo outlets. A strong financial position, with good cash generation and low gearing, has enabled the company to increase investment from £34 million to £55 million last year.

The problem for the investor is that square City games have spotted First Leisure's attractions and the company sits on an expensive rating of 20 times earnings. Cautious words yesterday suggest 1996 will be no more than solid and it will another year before the benefits of new show through. The shares are cheap, but the price is higher but unless the price slips further, better value can be found elsewhere.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

COMMODITIES

LONDON				ICE-MEL (London 5,000)psd				GNI LONDON GRAIN FUT. RES.					
COMMODITY EXCHANGE				CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel) fob				WHEAT					
COCA				Brent 10000				Durum 10000					
Mar	...	91.00	May	...	100-100	...	...	Jan	...	121.00	Jan	...	118.00
Jul	...	92.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	122.00	Jul	...	119.00
Oct	...	93.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	123.00	Oct	...	120.00
Dec	...	94.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	124.00	Dec	...	121.00
Jan	...	95.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	125.00	Jan	...	122.00
Mar	...	96.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	126.00	Mar	...	123.00
May	...	97.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	127.00	May	...	124.00
Jul	...	98.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	128.00	Jul	...	125.00
Oct	...	99.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	129.00	Oct	...	126.00
Dec	...	100.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	130.00	Dec	...	127.00
Jan	...	101.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	131.00	Jan	...	128.00
Mar	...	102.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	132.00	Mar	...	129.00
May	...	103.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	133.00	May	...	130.00
Jul	...	104.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	134.00	Jul	...	131.00
Oct	...	105.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	135.00	Oct	...	132.00
Dec	...	106.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	136.00	Dec	...	133.00
Jan	...	107.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	137.00	Jan	...	134.00
Mar	...	108.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	138.00	Mar	...	135.00
May	...	109.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	139.00	May	...	136.00
Jul	...	110.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	140.00	Jul	...	137.00
Oct	...	111.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	141.00	Oct	...	138.00
Dec	...	112.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	142.00	Dec	...	139.00
Jan	...	113.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	143.00	Jan	...	140.00
Mar	...	114.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	144.00	Mar	...	141.00
May	...	115.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	145.00	May	...	142.00
Jul	...	116.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	146.00	Jul	...	143.00
Oct	...	117.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	147.00	Oct	...	144.00
Dec	...	118.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	148.00	Dec	...	145.00
Jan	...	119.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	149.00	Jan	...	146.00
Mar	...	120.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	150.00	Mar	...	147.00
May	...	121.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	151.00	May	...	148.00
Jul	...	122.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	152.00	Jul	...	149.00
Oct	...	123.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	153.00	Oct	...	150.00
Dec	...	124.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	154.00	Dec	...	151.00
Jan	...	125.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	155.00	Jan	...	152.00
Mar	...	126.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	156.00	Mar	...	153.00
May	...	127.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	157.00	May	...	154.00
Jul	...	128.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	158.00	Jul	...	155.00
Oct	...	129.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	159.00	Oct	...	156.00
Dec	...	130.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	160.00	Dec	...	157.00
Jan	...	131.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	161.00	Jan	...	158.00
Mar	...	132.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	162.00	Mar	...	159.00
May	...	133.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	163.00	May	...	160.00
Jul	...	134.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	164.00	Jul	...	161.00
Oct	...	135.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	165.00	Oct	...	162.00
Dec	...	136.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	166.00	Dec	...	163.00
Jan	...	137.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	167.00	Jan	...	164.00
Mar	...	138.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	168.00	Mar	...	165.00
May	...	139.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	169.00	May	...	166.00
Jul	...	140.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	170.00	Jul	...	167.00
Oct	...	141.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	171.00	Oct	...	168.00
Dec	...	142.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	172.00	Dec	...	169.00
Jan	...	143.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	173.00	Jan	...	170.00
Mar	...	144.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	174.00	Mar	...	171.00
May	...	145.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	175.00	May	...	172.00
Jul	...	146.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	176.00	Jul	...	173.00
Oct	...	147.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	177.00	Oct	...	174.00
Dec	...	148.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	178.00	Dec	...	175.00
Jan	...	149.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	179.00	Jan	...	176.00
Mar	...	150.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	180.00	Mar	...	177.00
May	...	151.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	181.00	May	...	178.00
Jul	...	152.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	182.00	Jul	...	179.00
Oct	...	153.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	183.00	Oct	...	180.00
Dec	...	154.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	184.00	Dec	...	181.00
Jan	...	155.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	185.00	Jan	...	182.00
Mar	...	156.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	186.00	Mar	...	183.00
May	...	157.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	187.00	May	...	184.00
Jul	...	158.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	188.00	Jul	...	185.00
Oct	...	159.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	189.00	Oct	...	186.00
Dec	...	160.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	190.00	Dec	...	187.00
Jan	...	161.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	191.00	Jan	...	188.00
Mar	...	162.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	192.00	Mar	...	189.00
May	...	163.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	193.00	May	...	190.00
Jul	...	164.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	194.00	Jul	...	191.00
Oct	...	165.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	195.00	Oct	...	192.00
Dec	...	166.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	196.00	Dec	...	193.00
Jan	...	167.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	197.00	Jan	...	194.00
Mar	...	168.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	198.00	Mar	...	195.00
May	...	169.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	199.00	May	...	196.00
Jul	...	170.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	200.00	Jul	...	197.00
Oct	...	171.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	201.00	Oct	...	198.00
Dec	...	172.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	202.00	Dec	...	199.00
Jan	...	173.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	203.00	Jan	...	200.00
Mar	...	174.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	204.00	Mar	...	201.00
May	...	175.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	205.00	May	...	202.00
Jul	...	176.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	206.00	Jul	...	203.00
Oct	...	177.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	207.00	Oct	...	204.00
Dec	...	178.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	208.00	Dec	...	205.00
Jan	...	179.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	209.00	Jan	...	206.00
Mar	...	180.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	210.00	Mar	...	207.00
May	...	181.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	211.00	May	...	208.00
Jul	...	182.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	212.00	Jul	...	209.00
Oct	...	183.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	213.00	Oct	...	210.00
Dec	...	184.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	214.00	Dec	...	211.00
Jan	...	185.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	215.00	Jan	...	212.00
Mar	...	186.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	216.00	Mar	...	213.00
May	...	187.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	217.00	May	...	214.00
Jul	...	188.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	218.00	Jul	...	215.00
Oct	...	189.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	219.00	Oct	...	216.00
Dec	...	190.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	220.00	Dec	...	217.00
Jan	...	191.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	221.00	Jan	...	218.00
Mar	...	192.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	222.00	Mar	...	219.00
May	...	193.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	223.00	May	...	220.00
Jul	...	194.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	224.00	Jul	...	221.00
Oct	...	195.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	225.00	Oct	...	222.00
Dec	...	196.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	226.00	Dec	...	223.00
Jan	...	197.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	227.00	Jan	...	224.00
Mar	...	198.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	228.00	Mar	...	225.00
May	...	199.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	229.00	May	...	226.00
Jul	...	200.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	230.00	Jul	...	227.00
Oct	...	201.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	231.00	Oct	...	228.00
Dec	...	202.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	232.00	Dec	...	229.00
Jan	...	203.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	233.00	Jan	...	230.00
Mar	...	204.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	234.00	Mar	...	231.00
May	...	205.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	235.00	May	...	232.00
Jul	...	206.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	236.00	Jul	...	233.00
Oct	...	207.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	237.00	Oct	...	234.00
Dec	...	208.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	238.00	Dec	...	235.00
Jan	...	209.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	239.00	Jan	...	236.00
Mar	...	210.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	240.00	Mar	...	237.00
May	...	211.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	241.00	May	...	238.00
Jul	...	212.00	Jul	...	...	...	...	Jul	...	242.00	Jul	...	239.00
Oct	...	213.00	Oct	...	...	...	...	Oct	...	243.00	Oct	...	240.00
Dec	...	214.00	Dec	...	...	...	...	Dec	...	244.00	Dec	...	241.00
Jan	...	215.00	Jan	...	...	...	...	Jan	...	245.00	Jan	...	242.00
Mar	...	216.00	Mar	...	...	...	...	Mar	...	246.00	Mar	...	243.00
May	...	217.00	May	...	...	...	...	May	...	247.00	May	...	244.00
Jul	...	218.00	Jul	...	...	...				

Tom Rhodes in Washington on the latest political storm

A slip which could cost Dole the presidency

THE BLIZZARDS that have swathed Washington in 3ft of snow claimed their most political victim this week when Elizabeth Dole, wife of the leading Republican presidential candidate, slipped on ice and fractured her wrist while out walking the dog.

For Mrs Dole, who has briefly left the presidency of the American Red Cross to pursue her husband's final attempt at the White House, the injury has proved a minor irritation that should heal in time for the campaigning ahead.

A simultaneous political storm, emerging from a long career that has left a trail of policy decisions and private financial transactions, is unlikely to blow away with such ease.

Already *The New Yorker* magazine has turned its spotlight on her past, suggesting she had benefited financially from special treatment because of the political activities of her

The New Yorker controversy, raising issues that surfaced during Mr Dole's presidential campaign in 1988, centres on David Owen, for 20 years one of the senator's closest aides in Kansas before he was convicted of tax fraud.

He spent much of that time managing Mrs Dole's personal investments, placing them in a blind trust while she served in government. The magazine suggests that Mrs Dole was given special treatment on several occasions.

Mrs Dole has dismissed the allegations and Mr Owen has said she was not actually told of blind-trust investments prior to any transaction.

The Doles have made every attempt to minimise the relationship they once had with Mr Owen, a course strikingly similar to that taken by the Clintons with once-favoured associates in Arkansas.

More than that, the revelations have come at a time when American politics is being governed by semantics. If pundits throughout the country are debating whether 60 hours of work in Arkansas by Hillary Clinton can be described as "minimal", should not Elizabeth Dole, a trained lawyer with top-flight degrees from Duke and Harvard who spent time at Oxford, be expected to read her own financial statements?

This may be the first electoral reminder that beneath the charming southern veneer of Elizabeth Dole lies an ambition that has already taken her to the top of the departments of transportation and labour, as well as the American Red Cross. She has harboured ambitions for the presidency as well as the vice-presidency and, since student days, has wanted to be married to the President of the United States.

Until now, the woman described by Lyndon B. Johnson as "a sugar-coated magnolia" has managed to disguise her single-minded intent, but just as conservative America thought it had seen the back of one dabbling First Lady, another is apparently waiting chameleon-like in the wings.



Elizabeth Dole

How I wrote the book, got the dog and fixed the film

Little did Valerie Grove know how big an impact writing *Dodie Smith's biography* would have on her own life

"I WRITE THIS sitting in the kitchen sink." Until recently I had never read the famous opening line of *Dodie Smith's I Capture the Castle*, but every woman I met (and several men) had. It had been in print for 45 years, a favourite with young girls and their mothers. Antonia Fraser told me it contained the most erotic scene ever written: Armistead Maupin based a novel on its format; and even the urromantic Alan Brien (the least sentimental man in the world, as his wife Jill Tweedie said) thought it a strangely beguiling work.

Then I was asked to write *Dodie Smith's biography* by the novelist Julian Barnes, her literary executor.

I had imagined the dog-loving Dodie to be a sweet little old lady, the author of 1930s plays like *Dear Octopus*, later an admired autobiographer of her flapper-girl youth on the stage, and as a salesgirl at Heal's in the 1920s.

Early in 1991 I happened to be interviewing Gwen Frangon-Davies on her 100th birthday, for *The Times*. After leaving her cottage I was driven back to Audley End station, and we passed a thatched cottage, closed and shuttered. "That was Dodie Smith's house," she had died six months before. "What happened to her last dalmatian?" I asked. I was told that Charley had died of a broken heart.

A few months later Julian Barnes rang. The hall of his house was now cluttered with Dodie's papers, to be shipped to Boston University. Carmen Callil, Julian said, wanted to publish a biography. She told me: "Read *I Capture the Castle*, then you'll do it."

She was right. I was captivated like so many others from page two, where Rose, the more beautiful of the two sisters who live in penury in a Suffolk castle, says she will go on the streets if necessary, to make some money, and Cassandra retorts briskly that she can't very well go on the streets in the depths of Suffolk. It was sharp and witty and full



Dodie Smith and Charley, her last dog: nagged by her lost fame, she wrote *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* in a state of furious resentment

of bizarre characters — and I knew that Dodie herself would be an interesting character.

I did not realise how interesting. After reading all her books and meeting her surviving friends, I got to snow-bound Boston in February 1994. Her diaries, which ran to millions of words, revealed that the lover she had called "Oliver" in her published memoirs was in fact Sir Ambrose Heal, the Terence Conran of his day. He already had a wife and a rather grand mistress, Lady Maufe, but Dodie told him shamelessly she would be content with "crumbs from a rich man's table". The character of "a young girl poised between childhood and adultery" resurfaced again and again in her novels.

There was also the faggotry. Dodie's circle of friends were almost all gay: Isherwood, John van Druten, Noel and Binkie etc. She preferred her menfolk untrammelled by wives and children — she never wanted children herself. Isherwood regarded her as one of the few people he could discuss his work with. When she came home from her long exile in America, she became fascinated by Julian Barnes, who arrived in 1969 at her cottage aged 22, a friend of her husband's half-sister Laurien: hence his literary executorship.

Several reviewers have remarked on what an unsympathetic creature Dodie was — selfish, egotistical, nagged by her lost fame and success when plays like *Dear Octopus* were superseded by angry young playwrights. But for a biographer this was a rich vein. It was in a state of furious resentment that she wrote *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* in 1956. When Disney bought it for his cartoon film, one of the most successful and money-spinning ever, it kept her going financially for years. And Pongo and Cruella de Vil have joined the immortals of children's literature.

There are two cheering postscripts to my story of a storyteller.

The first was that the moment I finished the book, I acquired a dalmatian puppy whom we named Beezie (Dodie's married name was Beesley) who happens to be the best-looking, best-natured dog in the world.

The other postscript is cinematic. When the original Disney dalmatians cartoon came out in 1961, Dodie wrote to Walt, peevishly complaining about the smallness of her credit at the end. "If you write me another of your cute little stories," Disney wrote back, "I will see that your credit is plenty large." Dodie at once sent him *I Capture the Castle* — it had been optioned many times since its publication in 1949 — which Disney snapped up for \$50,000 as a vehicle for Hayley Mills. But although screenplays were written,

the film was never made. At last, while I was writing the book, Dodie's estate managed to exchange the rights to *I Capture the Castle* for Disney's right to remake *101 Dalmatians*.

When I heard this, last February, I wrote to the film director Mike Newell, who was in Hollywood because of *Four Weddings and a Funeral's* Oscar nominations. I picked Newell because he had used my drawing-room to shoot a scene of a previous success: *Four of his*,

Enchanted April. I thought he dealt beautifully with Elizabeth von Arnim's exquisite novel about four women who leave dreary London for an Italian palazzo, and I thought he might work a similar translation to the screen for Dodie's oddly beguiling little masterpiece.

Last week I heard the thrilling news that Mark Shivas has secured *I Capture the Castle* as a feature film for BBC Films, and Mike Newell is indeed going to direct it. I wonder who will play the 17-year-old Cassandra? A terrific role for some budding mega-

star. (In 1954, when it had a brief run as a play at the Aldwych Theatre, Cassandra was played by Virginia McKenna, who won plaudits even from hard-hearted critics like Ken Tynan.)

We shall see. It is certainly going to be a very good year for Dodie Smith — her centenary year. And she would have loved seeing *I Capture the Castle* on screen at last.

Dear Dodie by Valerie Grove is published this week by Chatto & Windus at £22. There is a Kaleidoscope Special on Dodie Smith on Radio 4, Saturday, 7.30pm.

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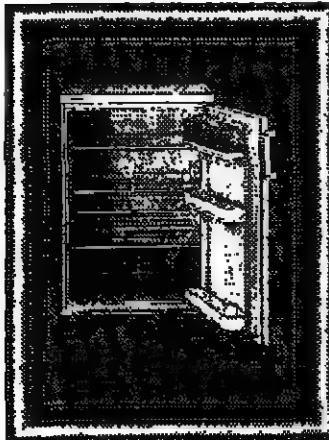
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INSIDE SECTION 2

Drinking himself to an Oscar? Nicolas Cage's performance in *Leaving Las Vegas* is reviewed by Geoff Brown Page 37

Profits at Stanley Leisure feel heat

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE BOOKMAKER'S nightmare — the favourite romping home every time — hit profits hard at the Stanley Leisure Organisation, the betting and casino group, which yesterday revealed a 25 per cent fall in its half-year profits to £6.1 million.

The company blamed the hot summer for hard racing surfaces, which favoured heavily backed horses and for keeping people away from betting shops. Profits in the racing division halved to £2.8 million on a turnover up 5 per cent to £145 million.

Stanley Leisure added that Sunday opening had not provided sufficient extra betting-shop revenue to justify the extra cost, and it criticised the evening racing programme for being spread over too many days.

Like-for-like turnover declined with the company blaming lottery scratch cards for removing profitable turnover at the lower end of the business.

The casino division, however, bucked the downward trend, increasing profits by 23 per cent to £4.6 million and turnover by 20 per cent to £18.9 million.

Leonard Steinberg, chairman of Stanley Leisure, said: "The first half coincided with the worst six months in racing which I can recall in my many years in the industry. But despite losing all of the Christmas week racing we consider that the worst is now over."

The City was disappointed with the performance and shares fell back 12p to 34p. But the interim dividend was maintained at 2p with the company expressing confidence about the future.

Stanley Leisure said that two new games had been introduced this year, with casino stud poker proving a great success although super pan nine has since been withdrawn.

Mr Steinberg also reiterated the gaming industry's plea for government action to ensure a level playing field in the wake of the introduction of the National Lottery.

Mr Steinberg described recent reforms, including a reduction in the betting levy, as welcome but insufficient.

The dividend will be paid on February 23.



Chipping in: Mike Kershaw, left, chief executive of Stanley Leisure, and Graham Gibson, managing director, at the company's Liverpool casino

Small firms still wary in spite of better links with banks

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE overall relationship between banks and small businesses has improved dramatically since the hostilities at the beginning of the 1990s, but there is some way to go, according to Howard Davies, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England.

In a speech to be given at the Manchester Merchant and International Bankers' Association last night, Mr Davies said there were "some continuing difficulties, which make

it hard to say with confidence that, as a nation, we are getting the most out of the entrepreneurship evident in our small firms".

The Bank yesterday published its annual report on Finance for Small Firms, which showed, said Mr Davies, that in terms of the provision of finance for growth "there is both light and shade, though the picture is brighter than before".

Figures from the British

Bankers' Association showed that £35.91 billion of bank finance was outstanding to small firms in June last year, confirming that banks remain important as the main source of external finance.

The lending figure was 0.8 per cent lower than the previous year, but the Bank report said this "does not necessarily imply a reluctance on behalf of the banks to lend, simply that small firms remain wary of committing themselves to debt

until they are more confident of the recovery".

The report showed that many firms are content to reduce existing overdrafts and "only to invest when the majority of costs can be met from internal funds". It also showed that banks had worked hard to encourage the use of fixed-term loans for longer-term purposes.

The Bank found that competition had pushed lending margins down, but that the

average bank lending margin remained at between 3 per cent and 4 per cent over base rate. It also found "significant differences between average margins charged by the main clearing banks, reflecting to some extent different earnings aspirations of these banks".

There was a fall in bank charges last year. But the report said that "high charges are still a source of small business complaints".

Mr Davies said small firms are no longer as "excessively reliant on variable rate overdrafts which left them vulnerable to the economic downturn of the early 1990s".

This year, the Bank plans to focus on initiatives to improve financial and management skills, on encouraging increased use of equity finance by growth-oriented small firms and on monitoring the effectiveness of the government support scheme, Business Links, in meeting the requirements of small businesses for information and financial services.

Fairey conducting US expansion

By PHILIP PANGLOSS

FAIREY GROUP, the industrial electronics and specialist engineering company, is expanding in America with the acquisition of Particle Measuring Systems Inc for a total of \$75 million.

PMS, based in Boulder, Colorado, makes instruments for microcontamination particle detection, mainly used in the semiconductor industry, but also for kets. PMS, which has 250 employees, expects

its operating profits in 1995 to be at least \$8.5 million, on sales of about \$39 million. It had net assets of \$10.4 million at the end of 1994. About half of PMS's sales are exported, mainly to the Far East and Europe.

The purchase will be financed through the issue of 893,160 ordinary shares and a vendor placing of seven million Fairey shares, underwritten by Cazenove, at 52p a share, as well as from existing borrowing.

Fairey expects the acquisition to be earnings enhancing. Assuming continuing satisfactory trading, Fairey expects to recommend a final dividend of at least 5.45p.

John Poulter, chief executive, expects the group to benefit by building on PMS's strong position in the growing semiconductor market. He added: "PMS is an excellent addition to Fairey's electronics activities."

Fairey shares advanced 20p to 566p.

ACCOUNTANCY

Time to take fraud seriously

Tony Bingham on the need to go deep into the British psyche to combat a genuine business menace

Fraud is a big problem that threatens every company in the UK and the wider public. The Audit Faculty of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales believes that more concerted action is needed if real progress is to be made controlling this menace.

Last week, the faculty issued a discussion paper, *Taking Fraud Seriously*, and held a conference attended by those in the front line against fraud, including Government, business, regulators, lawyers, accountants and auditors.

The strong message from the conference was that more can and should be done to deter fraudsters and to catch, prosecute and punish them if they offend. While the law and regulations can be improved and strengthened in certain areas, rules and process are not enough. If the problem is to be tackled seriously, there has to be a more robust attitude towards fraud in British business life.

Directors must establish and maintain an anti-fraud culture in their organisations, communicating to management, employees and third parties that dishonesty and

corruption will not be tolerated.

A well-publicised anti-fraud policy should be supported by risk assessment and control measures in the risk areas. The board should provide secure reporting channels for employees and others to voice their concerns about suspected fraud. It should also make clear how cases of suspected fraud are investigated and how perpetrators are dealt with.

One element is essential: every employee has to understand that the anti-fraud culture applies equally at all levels. Directors and senior managers must be, and seem to be, subject to the same code as everyone else.

Taking Fraud Seriously recommends a Code of Business Practice on dealing with fraud, including what should be reported to the authorities, and the audit faculty intends to consult business organisations to take this forward.

The Government also needs to play its part. The Treasury sponsors the Financial Fraud Information Network, but the scope of its activity and the use made of its information could be widened to include more than just government bodies



Tony Bingham wants to see an anti-fraud culture

and regulators such as the Stock Exchange.

Effective fraud prevention and detection will only start to happen when there is a more co-ordinated approach to sharing information and designing effective measures. *Taking Fraud Seriously* recommends

that the Government should establish an independent standing body — the Fraud Advisory Panel — which would have the task of increasing awareness of the problem and advising on counter measures. The Law Commission is

reviewing the law relating to dishonesty. There is a strong case for change and consolidation of civil and criminal law on fraud to make it more understandable and effective.

Specific legal changes would make prosecution easier and deter fraudsters. For instance, strengthening the law against knowingly misleading an auditor by extending section 389A of the Companies Act 1985 to cover anyone within the company rather than just a company officer, and increasing the maximum custodial sentence from two to five years.

Clearly auditors have a key role. The training and education of auditors has to be enhanced to ensure that they have the skills to meet their anti-fraud duties. But the auditor's attitude of challenge and scepticism is the key.

The audit faculty is convinced that the robustness of the external audit function must be maintained and enhanced. The conference helped to articulate auditors' determination to joining with others to achieve a step-change in reducing the effects of fraud.

Taking Fraud Seriously is available from the Audit Faculty, ICAEW, PO Box 433, Chartered Accountants Hall, Moorgate Place, London EC2P 2BJ.

Tony Bingham is a partner in Coopers & Lybrand and chairman of the technical and practical auditing committee of the Audit Faculty.

Should auditors blow the whistle?

EVEN the Queen knows about the expectation gap that auditors have created. According to Roger Davis, head of audit at Coopers & Lybrand, he found himself at an event organised by a charity for which Coopers did the audit. Introduced to the charity's patron, Her Majesty, he was asked what he did. "I am the auditor," he said. "Ah," said Her Majesty, "you find the frauds."

If you are an auditor, the normal response to this is a frenzied retreat into arcane legal arguments about duties, culminating in a denial that auditors have any responsibility for detecting fraud. Being an urbane soul, Mr Davis did not, apparently, burden Her Majesty with such arguments — he doesn't believe in them anyway — but it is a fine example of just how far from public opinion the auditing profession's view has strayed.

Mr Davis's revelations came at the fraud conference organised last week by the Audit Faculty of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. This followed the publication by the faculty of a series of proposals to limit fraud. It is a difficult topic. Auditors traditionally arrive at such debates with one arm tied behind their backs. They know that measures such as reporting on the effectiveness of internal controls would improve the detection of fraud. But they also know that lawyers stand in their way.

Mr Davis revealed that Coopers' letter of engagement covering the issue of the Cadbury Code alone entailed eight pages of closely typed legal jargon, which its lawyers insisted it has to produce.

He then argued that "auditors must be much more prepared to put their names to assurances of good corporate governance". But he added that this could not currently be so because they were "scared stiff of litigation".

Mr Davis argued passionately, but it is hard to avoid the view that much of this reluctance is as much to do with auditors living in a world of their own as any real aversion to putting their thumb print on a document. Later in the day, Kuldip Singh, QC, warned that "it is very important that any proposal for reform from the profession is not seen as special pleading merely for the benefit of members of the profession".

Adding his voice, Mark Sheldon, former senior partner at Linklaters & Paines and a member of the original Cadbury committee,

argued furiously that corporate governance reform had to be kept up. He also downplayed the threat of lawyers getting too caught up in the arguments over reporting on the effectiveness of internal control.

"Although most solicitors would disagree," he said, "I believe that a carefully worded opinion on effectiveness will be unlikely to add significantly to the liabilities of directors who have taken appropriate steps in this area and may serve to limit any over-optimistic implications as to directors' responsibilities that might otherwise exist." Most finance directors who understand what is at stake would agree with him.

Amidst this morass of squabbling lawyers and accountants, it is hard to remember that what is being argued over is a system which would have probably saved Barings Bank from itself. The fact that some directors dislike the idea of telling shareholders whether international controls are good enough and that some auditors would prefer not to express an opinion should not be allowed to get in the way. It was precisely such flabby dithering which allowed Barings to get itself into its disastrous position in the first place.

On another measure, there is much more agreement. This is the idea that Section 389A of the Companies Act 1985 should be strengthened. This is the measure which allows "officers of the company" to be prosecuted should they be found to have deceived the auditor.

Reform of this section is not a new idea. It was mooted immediately after the Polly Peck revelations. But it is ever more urgent.

Fraud trials are impossibly difficult. It is notoriously difficult to get a satisfactory result. None of us is likely to be as sure of what is right and what is wrong after months of lawyers demonstrating tangled webs of inter-connecting companies. Journalists have trouble in such circumstances in sticking to the first principle of "follow the money". Juries can be baffled. Proving that someone has deceived the auditor involves little more than two sheets of paper and a half-hour explanation. At present, no one bothers to prosecute because the maximum sentence of two years is not thought to be tough enough. Simple, says the audit faculty, increase it to five years and get on with some speedy prosecutions.



ROBERT BRUCE

Where watching figures is out

THE English ICA has a revolutionary in its basement. Deep beneath its Moorgate Place headquarters is a restaurant named after Pru Leith. Speaking at a recent event organised by recruitment consultants Robert Half, she revealed her views on business plans. And they were not the things that Moorgate Place would recognise. Her best advice came from fellow culinary luminary, Albert Roux. "He said: 'Look, it's perfectly

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

simple, forget about the budgets, targets, plans and all that garbage accountants tell you." The results of this advice can be tested by accountants beneath their own headquarters. Expect "humble pie" to appear on the menu very shortly.

Foresight

AT LAST week's English ICA fraud conference, Mark Sheldon of Linklaters & Paines quoted a remark about

corporate governance that Lord Young of Graham had made at a conference. "We have to take this seriously," said Sheldon, "because Lord Young is a president man. We know this because at the same conference he also said, 'If I do not succeed with my colleagues, the institutions will not waste much time in sending me in grey suits to tell me I should spend more time with my family.'"

A jubilant Sheldon concluded: "One month later, they did."

ed: "One month later, they did."

Brand of gold

BRAND names seem to have lost their value. Once, firms such as Coopers & Lybrand were gung-ho about the pot of gold that brand names could represent. But this week they let one of their own go for free, and ahead of time — the name Deloitte. As from last Monday, Touche Ross has become

Deloitte & Touche. "No money crossed the table," said a spokesman.

Junk TV

THE BBC children's programme, *Blue Peter*, aims to raise more than £500,000 for its "Paperchain" appeal by collecting 5,000 tonnes of high-grade household junk mail and other waste paper. Why am I telling you this? Simple. The charity accounting experts at Moores Rowland are monitoring the volume of waste collected. Presumably, no one has raided the partners' out-trays.

Modest falls at the close

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	997	996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Stansted's main terminal has been open for five years, writes **Harvey Elliott**. But the airport has yet to attract the transatlantic airlines

The fastest-growing airport in Britain

When the planners and the pundits of the early 1980s were asked to imagine how Stansted airport would have developed by 1996, they were of one accord.

It would be a sleek, easy and efficient airport handling mainly long-haul international flights. These would be matched by dozens of short haul international charter flights as package tour operators switched from Gatwick to the Essex base, where parking was easier and cheaper.

BAA, its owner and operator, listened and designed a new terminal to match. Outbound and inbound passengers were separated so that techniques for dealing with large numbers of international flights could be installed.

No one gave much thought to domestic passengers. Yet today, five years after the opening of the bright and airy terminal, designed by Sir Norman Foster, it is the domestic network which is making Stansted the fastest-growing airport in Britain.

In 1995, Stansted handled 3.99 million passengers, an increase of 19.4 per cent on the previous year. For the 12 months to the end of January, there will have been well over 4 million passengers, including 750,000 using British or Irish flights, double the number for last year.

The growth has been so great that BAA is appealing to Parliament to allow the airport to grow so that it can handle 15 million a year, almost double its existing permitted limit of 8 million.

Terry Morgan, Stansted's managing director, says: "The big demand has been for domestic passengers, who are now having to use terminals which were not designed for them. If we can get the increase in overall capacity, we would have the confidence to spend up to £100 million in building a domestic terminal."

This is music to the ears of both Air UK and Ryanair, airlines which have made Stansted their home airport. Air UK, for example, serves 20 destinations from Stansted, including 14 key European cities and each of the major cities in the UK's own domestic network. Its routes to and from Stansted were the fastest-



□ Families can enjoy a free fun day at Stansted airport this Sunday and next (January 21, 28), 10am to 4pm. Parking is free in the long-stay car park for three hours. There will be music, children's activities, prizes and a free holiday draw.

growing, rising to 1.4 million passengers in 1995 — 24 per cent up on the previous year. Ryanair carried 988,000 passengers through Stansted in 1995 on its 11-strong fleet of Boeing 737s. It is now drawing up plans to operate from Stansted to the bigger cities on the Continent and to increase its UK domestic routes.

Privately, Stansted officials admit that they have been disappointed that the big long-haul airlines have not been able to make a financial success of the airport. Several have tried. Mr Morgan says: "Realistically, we have to accept that United, American and most of the other big transatlantic carriers have their eyes on Heathrow. Our priority now must be to attract a big European carrier and to develop the routes from Stansted. Then, when a large carrier decides to come in, it will find a network of connecting flights ready and waiting." El Al operates to New York from Tel Aviv via Stansted and apparently finds the market both vibrant and profitable. Others, it is hoped, will follow, especially new carriers from Eastern Europe.

The real breakthrough is,

however, still around the corner, although some believe it could come if Heathrow's proposed terminal five is rejected by the Government. This could be crucial to the future shape of Stansted. In its first

full year of operation, 1991, Stansted lost £30 million. In the current financial year it is likely to lose £10 million. Officials believe that the airport will be making a profit within 18 months.

The charges for airlines to land and park led rival airports to challenge Stansted's policies in the courts, claiming that it was being unfairly subsidised by its parent group.

"We have to try to balance between the need to attract airlines to Stansted and the need to charge fees which will bring us to profit as soon as possible," Mr Morgan says. "Even if we were not part of the BAA group, we would still do the same as we are today."

That Stansted is now growing faster than any other major commercial airport in Britain cannot be in doubt. It is particularly attractive to charter airlines passengers and its fast train link to Liverpool Street station makes it a natural centre for domestic services.

What Stansted needs is a giant airline to move in and turn it into a great international airport. A scheduled European "flag-carrier" would be a start. To judge by the pace of development in the airport, that could happen at any time.



Terry Morgan, right, MD of Stansted, and Brian Beal, of Air Belfast, celebrate the improved domestic air links

At last, a cure for terminal stress.

London Stansted has been carefully designed to be the most stress-free airport ever built.

Our award winning Terminal (there is just the one you'll be relieved to hear) is congestion free and a pleasure to use. It's an easy 150 metre stroll from the entrance to the airside lounge. And it's all on one level.

London Stansted is also easy to get to. The railway station is built directly under the Terminal. Express trains run every 30 minutes to and from Liverpool St Station, in the Heart of the City, with a journey time of around 40 minutes. The airport road system links directly with the motorway network. It's right by the M11 (Junction 8) and the M25 is less than twenty minutes away.



Services are increasing all the time and destinations currently include: Aberdeen, Amsterdam, Asturias, Belfast City, Belfast International, Brussels, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Cork, Dijon, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Edinburgh, Florence, Frankfurt, Glasgow, Guernsey (summer only), Hamburg, Havana, Helsinki, Innsbruck, Jersey, Knock, La Coruña, Lille, Londonderry, Luxembourg, Maastricht, Madrid, Manchester, Milan, Munich, Newcastle, New York, Nice, Paris, Prague (from March 31), Prestwick, St. Petersburg, Tel Aviv, Waterford, Zaragoza, Zurich.

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The American dream comes true

El Al, the Israeli carrier, has just confirmed that it will continue with its transatlantic service this summer from Stansted to Newark airport, New York. The route was launched last October and early indications are that it will be a success.

The decision is a great boost for Stansted because the New Jersey airport provides its only transatlantic link, something the airport has needed to maintain its credibility as London's third airport.

Hopes were initially high in the early 1990s that Stansted would relieve pressure on Heathrow and Gatwick take-off and landing "slots" by offering a number of transatlantic services. But American Airlines, which started a Stansted to Chicago service in 1992, was forced to pull out a year later after demand from business travellers proved disappointing. Since then, expect-

El Al has made the vital US link, David Churchill says

tations have been raised that another leading carrier, such as Delta or TWA, would move to Stansted and provide a New York service. But these hopes have been dashed by the stagnating UK-US bilateral talks regulating flights between the two countries. American carriers are reluctant to use Stansted when the possibility of gaining far more lucrative Heathrow slots remains open.

Another American carrier, Tower Air, had been keen to diversify its India-Amsterdam-New York route via Stansted, thus creating a new service. But because this would require Tower Air to gain British

permission for flying the India leg of the journey, Tower Air is understood to have decided against applying for the route this year.

Terry Morgan, Stansted airport's managing director, believes that it is better to have a firm agreement with American carriers before starting a new service. He says: "We don't want the legacy of the American Airlines experience, where carriers come in and pull out again. That is too unstable a situation."

The El Al service, however, is not covered by the US bilateral talks, so it is a bonus for Stansted. The three-weekly service, using Boeing 757s and sometimes Boeing 747s, is also one of the cheapest ways of getting to New York. The present economy return fare is £167, plus £26 tax, although the business-class fares are comparable with those charged by other airlines. The service also has another



A Cuban jet at Stansted ready for the weekly run to Cuba. This is the only scheduled airline service to the communist country from Britain

angle for Stansted in that it additionally provides a route, albeit roundabout, to Tel Aviv as the plane continues its journey from New York to the Israeli capital.

Attracting a big transatlantic carrier is difficult, so Mr Morgan is concentrating on gaining more European routes for Stansted. Starting in April, for example, is a new

four-times-a-week service to Prague operated by Czech Airlines, which already has flights from Heathrow and Gatwick — "another example of how European airlines are recognising the value of a Stansted service as well," says Mr Morgan.

Stansted operates scheduled services to 41 destinations, and carriers ranging from Aeroflot (twice-weekly to St Petersburg in Russia) to the Romanian airline Tarom (to Bucharest once a week). In all, 14 airlines run scheduled services from Stansted, including the franchise service British Airways Express, flying to Manchester and Waterford in Ireland.

Most intriguing is probably the weekly service to Cuba — the only scheduled service from Britain to the communist state — operated by Cubana. Other scheduled carriers include Air Excel, Avia, Finnair, Luxair and Protus.

More than 600,000 passengers — about 15 per cent of the total — flew last year on domestic scheduled services, more than half on business trips. But only just over a quarter of those on international flights are flying on business; the rest are travelling on leisure.

Stansted's charter operations — in the minority for most of the year, but which come into their own during the summer months — also offer a wide range of holiday destinations, mainly to Europe's sun spots. There are hopes for more flights to America.

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Ryanair now carries more than a million passengers a year between Dublin and Stansted

Ulster peace brings a tourist dividend

The Northern Ireland ceasefire, which has had the impact of creating an additional peace dividend for Stansted airport, instead of handling small numbers of passengers travelling between Stansted and Belfast, is now carrying more than 250,000 a year.

The improved flow along this air corridor to Northern Ireland has been one of the most significant developments at both airports during the past 12 months.

A year ago there was just one daily turboprop aircraft leaving at lunchtime for Belfast; now there are eight jet aircraft making the trip every day, operated by Air Belfast and Jersey European. Tourist arrivals from Ulster have increased by 40 per cent over the past year.

The Essex airport is also now one of the key gateways for the Republic of Ireland, serviced by Ryanair, the second-biggest operator from Stansted. The airline carries more than a million passengers a year between Dublin and Stansted. In October the airline introduced a

service between Stansted and Glasgow's Prestwick airport. Ryanair's success at Stansted has been based on a low-cost strategy, emulating the success of no-frills carriers in some part of the US. More than three-quarters of its traffic to and from Dublin is at fares of up to £59; the highest fare is £99. This contrasts with full fares on other carriers of up to £249.

Tim Jeans, Ryanair's UK chief executive, says: "Our top

fare of £99 return attracted enormous interest from business travellers tired of paying £100 more than we charged for the privilege of a hot breakfast."

Ryanair has carried more than 30,000 passengers between Glasgow and London since the new route started; 560 seats a day are available at a fare of £29 one-way. An extra selling point has been the offer of free rail travel until March 31 for passengers to anywhere in Scotland as part of their journey.

Air UK, the largest airline using Stansted, flies to 20 destinations in both the UK and Europe and accounts for some 40 per cent of all passengers using the airport. Air UK also introduced services to Zurich and Madrid, helping to increase passenger numbers by 24 per cent. Extra flights are planned to popular destinations. Air UK is also now the largest foreign airline using Stansted's Schiphol airport, the home of KLM, which owns 45 per cent of the airline.

Tony Le Masurier, the sales and marketing director for Air UK, believes that it can compete with British Airways and British Midland.

He says: "Our growth shows that the British public is increasingly following the American lead and treating short-haul domestic and European flights almost routinely."

Mr Le Masurier also confirms that Air UK has no plans to change its one-class service. "We have found no pressing demand for a business class cabin", he says. The Sterling Service provides hot or cold meals depending on the flight time, and complimentary drinks and newspapers. But 26,000 frequent fliers with Air UK qualify for an Executive Card, which gives access to lounges, a telephone check-in service and a pre-flight choice of seat. Card-holders are also given membership of KLM's Flying Dutchman frequent-flyer programme.

DAVID CHURCHILL

Ideas handled with care

Tony Dawe reports on the airport's future

Improving links with the local community has become a top priority for managers at Stansted as they plan to expand the airport. A glossy four-page information bulletin, *Stansted Forum*, is delivered regularly to surrounding households and businesses. An opinion poll was commissioned from MORI, and flies imposed on airlines for breaching noise limits are given to local causes.

The survey found that aircraft noise is of the greatest concern and likely to remain so as the airport seeks permission to raise its limit of 78,000 aircraft movements a year. Terry Morgan, Stansted's managing director, insists the increase is essential if the airport is to reach its initial target of handling eight million passengers a year by 2000 and 15 million by 2007.

Mr Morgan takes heart from the survey's findings that most residents view Stansted positively for its advantages to the local economy. But he says he and his staff are working to see whether noisier planes can be phased out. "We are not seeking approval for extra flights just for the sake of it," says Tony Astor, Stansted's cargo manager. "It will help us to achieve our aim of establishing Stansted as an international airport in its own right, with scheduled services as the backbone of the business — vital if air links for London as a whole are to be maintained."

Stansted attracts increasing numbers of passengers from North London. And the improved M25 river crossing at Dartford now wows them in north Kent. Better links between the M11, A1 and M1 also make the airport more accessible.

Local environment groups are concerned at its continued expansion. They have seen Stansted develop as London's third airport, although it was not considered an option by the commission, headed by Lord Roskill, which investigated the best site for an additional airport to Heathrow and Gatwick in the early 1970s. Its role was finally confirmed by a public inquiry in 1985. Their worst fear is that Stansted will get a second runway, which would blight parts of Essex. Mr Astor insists their fears are groundless.

"The existing runway," he says, "will handle at least 35 million passengers a year and we are talking of expanding to 15 million at the moment."

The airport management is also keen to reassure residents about pollutants, including hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides, emitted by vehicles, power plants and jets. Officials monitored air quality at 40 sites on and around the airport and found that the highest pollution levels were caused by road — not air — traffic.



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From racehorses to Rolls-Royces and pearls

Tony Dawe
behind the
scenes of the
cargo carriers

Cloth from Turkey, flowers from Colombia, grapes from South Africa and racehorses returning from Jordan are just some of the goods which arrive regularly at Stansted airport and have helped to turn it into Britain's third-busiest cargo airport.

They are carried aboard 200 weekly flights operated by a variety of aircraft, from old four-engined turbo-prop Lockheed Electras to McDonnell Douglas's latest twin-engined long-haul MD 11s. A regular sight at Stansted are the giant Russian Antonov 124 freighters, which can carry 150-tonne loads and are the only aircraft big enough to transport the engines for the new Boeing 777s.

Operated by HeavyLift Cargo Airlines, the Antonovs might arrive with vast pieces of engineering equipment but they often leave with gentler loads intended to alleviate suffering in countries ravaged by war or disaster.

In the run-up to Christmas, they were working for a charity which collected gifts and practical items in shoeboxes to be taken, 100,000 of them at a time, to Bosnia and Rwanda.

The staple fare of Stansted's world cargo centre, however, is mail and express parcels. Every night, more than a dozen flights, operated by airlines like Channel Express, head for Belfast, Edinburgh, Newcastle and other airports north and west with the mail.

They are followed by services to major European cities operated by TNT Express Worldwide, which uses Stansted as a collecting point for its European fast parcels service, and by flights to France, Germany and the United States, operated by Federal Express.

"The expansion of the FedEx operation and the arrival of TNT from Luton are largely responsible for the astonishing growth in our cargo traffic over the last couple of years," says Tony Astor, Stansted's cargo manager.



Lift-off: an engine for a Boeing 777 is loaded aboard a 124 Antonov freighter

Among new cargo services starting soon are a weekly Royal Jordanian Airlines flight to Amman and a twice-weekly service to Tel Aviv operating with a British Airways flight number.

Unlike Heathrow, which handles the largest amount of air cargo in Britain with most of it travelling in the holds of passenger aircraft, almost all Stansted's cargo travels in freighters. The cargo centre can accommodate up to six jumbo freighters at any one time and provides 15,000 square metres of warehouses to store the goods.

Both TNT and Federal Express have their own transit sheds while two more are run by Servisair and GHI, the Stansted offshoot of Gatwick Handling, which between them look after dozens of airlines.

Stansted is also linked to Cargo Community System UK, the computer-based Customs clearance and documentation system which serves all three London airports and is used by hundreds of forwarding agents throughout the country.

The system enables agents to track cargo consignments through every stage of their journey, from point of origin to final destination, with Customs procedures and documentation handled automatically.

The facilities and space at Stansted encourage outside shippers to use it. Last week, a consignment of classic cars, including Rolls-Royces and Ferraris, was awaiting collection in the Servisair shed, having arrived by sea at Felixstowe from the United States. "They gave us something new to admire," said Fred Cracknell, Servisair's cargo co-ordinator. "But there was no way we could have stored them before Christmas: the shed was full of hundreds of tonnes of grapes, other foods, clothes and flowers heading for the shops."

Local people and airport staff can also make use of seven shops in the check-in area. A store is also being added which will enable arrivals passengers to stock up on groceries before returning home.

High street shopping
at your local airport

Passengers waiting in the departure lounge at Stansted can while away the time with their own mini-lottery at the Pearl House kiosk. For £9.99 they can buy an oyster which is guaranteed to contain a pearl. David Churchill writes. It could be worth £10 or maybe £78, depending on the size of the pearl. The pearls can be immediately mounted on a brooch or a necklace. This is a novel addition to the growing range of retail shops, coffee shops and restaurants available to travellers on both sides of passport control.

Clive Cranwell, retail operations manager, says: "We are well on our way to establishing a top retail centre here." His enthusiasm is not surprising since the airport receives just under half its total revenue from retailing outlets. Those using Stansted spend more per head than at Heathrow, Gatwick or any other airport operated by BAA.



Buying magazines and books — an important part of Stansted's check-in area

The restaurant in the departure lounge is being redeveloped and there are ideas for a pub and an additional coffee shop there.

The biggest change has been a £250,000 revamp of the duty

free shop. Malt whisky, gin and vodka sell at up to 50 per cent off manufacturer's recommended prices, with perfumes up to 30 per cent cheaper. The Historical Research Centre provides waiting passengers with the chance to buy a computer-generated coat of arms which can be framed on the spot.

All Stansted's retail outlets are covered by the BAA guarantee, which promises a full refund from anywhere in the world if a passenger is not satisfied with any product bought from an airport shop. Children are not forgotten. Entertainment centres, called Funbase, offer electronic and video games.

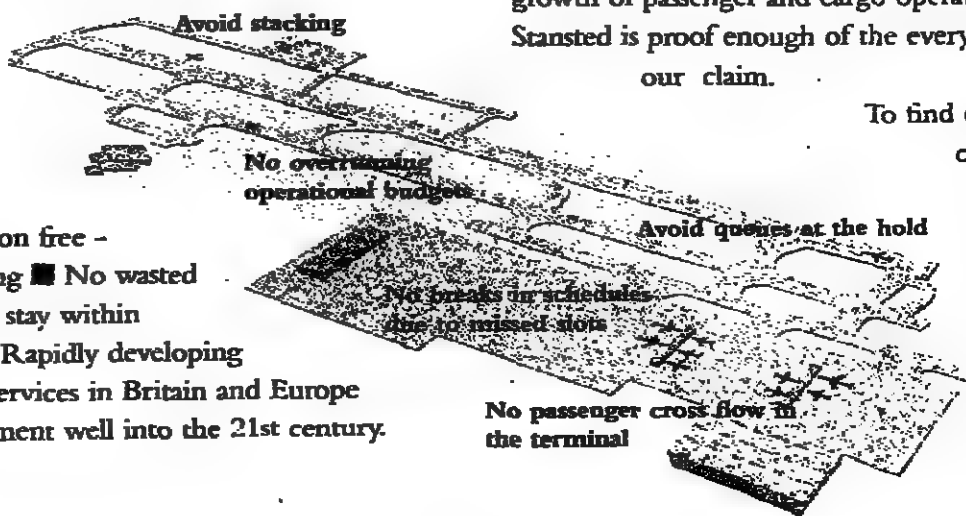
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Law Report January 18 1996 Court of Appeal

Automatic directions timetable prevails over that in form

Williams v Globe Coaches and Another
Darby v Ginsters Cornish Pasties Ltd

Before Sir Thomas Bingham, Lord Justice Waite and Lord Justice Otton
(Judgment December 18)

The timetable for the operation of the automatic directions prescribed by Order 17, rule 11 of the County Court Rules (SI 1981 No 1687 (L20)), as substituted by rule 14 of the County Court (Amendment No 3) Rules (SI 1994 No 1704 (L17)), prevailed over any different timetable indicated on Form N450 by the county court when acting in its administrative capacity and sending that form to the parties.

Where, however, a plaintiff had been misled by reliance on the timetable indicated on the form and in consequence had not requested a hearing date within the period specified by the rules as he would otherwise have done so that his action had been automatically struck out under Order 17, rule 11(9), the court would ordinarily accede to his application for reinstatement without requiring him to satisfy the exacting conditions specified in the existing directions where a plaintiff, having failed to comply with a date prescribed by the rules, was at mercy.

The Court of Appeal so held:

(i) allowing an appeal by the plaintiff.

Susan Williams, from Judge Michael Burr, at Cardiff County Court, who had held that her action claiming damages for personal injuries against Globe Coaches and Peter Evans had been automatically struck out under Order 17, rule 11(9) on June 5, 1994 and should not be reinstated; and

(ii) allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, Julia Darby, from Judge Wignmore, at Plymouth County Court, who had affirmed an order of the district judge declaring that her action claiming damages for personal injuries against Ginsters Cornish Pasties Ltd had been automatically struck out under Order 17, rule 11(9) on September 6, 1994 and that her request made by letter of September 22, 1994, for a hearing date was out of time and had dismissed her application for an extension of time for setting down the action.

First action: Mr Edwin Glasgow, QC and Mr Ian Bullock for the plaintiff, Mr James Bell for the defendants.

Second action: Mr Edwin Glasgow, QC and Mr Adam Chippindall for the plaintiff, Mr John Rogers, QC and Mr Richard Stead for the defendants.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS said that under Order 17, rule 11(9) the automatic directions timetable ran from the date on which pleadings were deemed to be closed. That date, defined in rule 11(1), was 14 days after delivery of a defence in

accordance with Order 9, rule 2, or, where a counterclaim was served with the defence, 28 days after delivery of the defence.

That date, the trigger date, was of fundamental importance since it triggered the operation of the timetable. If no request was made to the proper officer to fix a hearing date within 15 months of the trigger date, the action was to be automatically struck out under rule 11(9). The 15-month date, the guillotine date, was the date on which the guillotine fell.

His Lordship referred to County Court Form N450 (see *The County Court Practice* 1995 p304) entitled "Notice that automatic directions apply" which was sent to the plaintiff and the parties after delivery of the defence and gave guidance on the steps to be complied with under the automatic directions.

In particular, the form provided for the defendant to state that he was not aware of the automatic directions timetable being 14 days after the date of service of the defence or 28 days thereafter if a counterclaim was filed with the defence.

The form had been approved by the Lord Chancellor or his department, but was not prescribed since no county court rule required such a notice to be served nor specified its contents.

Its object was, however, reasonably

plain to alert recipients to the timetable, to remind them of the effect of Order 17, rule 11, to encourage compliance with the automatic directions regime and to alert them to the sanction if no hearing date was requested within the time limit.

The form was sent routinely from county courts to litigants without any judicial intervention or decision. In such cases the sending of the form did not involve any exercise of the court's jurisdiction by a judge or a district judge. It was merely an administrative act. In each case there was a clear finding by the judge that the form had been despatched in that way.

Accordingly there could not be said to be any giving of directions by the court under Order 17, rule 11(2)(b) or any giving of directions or orders under rule 11(4).

His Lordship referred to the first case, in which proceedings had been issued in Reading County Court in January 1993. After delivery of the defence the county court on February 10 issued Form N450, inserting that date and giving the impression that the trigger date was 14 days thereafter, and June 5, 1994 the guillotine date.

After the proceedings were transferred to Cardiff County Court that court on October 6 issued a further Form N450 specifying that date. Under that form, the trigger date would have been 14 days thereafter and the guillotine date

15 months later. On September 22, 1994, after the guillotine date calculated by reference to the first Form N450 had before that calculated by reference to the second form, the defendants took the point that the action had been automatically struck out.

On the plaintiff's application for a declaration that the action had not been struck out, alternatively for its reinstatement, the judge accepted the evidence of the legal executive who handled the matter that she had relied on the timetable to be derived from the second form and had accordingly been misled. The questions therefore were:

(1) When, under the rules, was the action automatically struck out?

(2) If it had been struck out before the second guillotine date, on what terms if any should it be reinstated?

The answer his Lordship would give to question (1) was that where the sending out of the form involved no exercise of judicial discretion at all it could not be said to be a giving of directions. The rule, Order 17, rule 11, as was clear, set out a timetable with a draconian sanction if the requirement was not complied with.

The mere sending out by the court of a form not itself prescribed and without any judicial intention to vary the timetable could not have that effect. The date on which automatic strike out

occurred was clearly specified in rule 11(9) and in the present circumstances Form N450 could not alter it.

In answering question (2) his Lordship emphasised that the present situation was entirely different from that which the court had attempted to regulate in *Rastin v British Steel plc* [1994] 1 WLR 732.

There the plaintiff, or his advisers, had failed to comply with the date prescribed by the rules and was therefore at mercy. The court had thought it right to impose a test of reinstatement which would in large measure give effect to the intention underlying the rules.

Here the situation was different: a plaintiff had been misled by a document received from the county court into believing that the timetable ran from a later date than it in fact did, and as a result had failed to request a hearing date which he would otherwise have done.

That was not a situation which the court had had in mind in *Rastin*, it was altogether different and different considerations of fairness had to be taken into account.

It would be unfair if a plaintiff who had fallen foul of the rules as a result of relying on an apparently clear and unequivocal document sent by the county court itself was to be obliged to satisfy the exacting conditions of reinstatement specified in *Rastin*.

Accordingly in the ordinary way and in the absence of special circumstances the action should be willing to reinstate the action, although it was to be emphasised that it was an essential condition of reinstatement that the plaintiff had actually been misled.

Turning to the second case: proceedings had been issued on April 6, 1993 and a defence delivered on or about May 24. Accordingly the trigger date was June 7, 1993 and the guillotine date September 7, 1994.

The date specified on Form N450 was June 9, 1993 from which date 23 would be derived as the trigger date, and September 23, 1994 as the guillotine date. Between the two guillotine dates application had been made to extend time.

It accordingly followed from the decision in the first case that the timetable prescribed by the rules had remained in effect but that in all the circumstances it would be appropriate to reinstate the action.

The appeals would therefore be allowed and the actions reinstated.

Solicitors: Lyons Davidson, Bristol; Cole & Cole, Reading; Blight, Broad & Skinnard, Saltspring; Curwights, Bristol.

County court actions struck out by passage of time under new rule

Gardner v Southwark London Borough Council
King v East Cambridgeshire District Council and Another
Thompson v Wickens Building Group Ltd

Before Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Waite and Lord Justice Otton
(Judgment December 18)

Order 17, rule 11(9) of the County Court Rules 1981, as substituted, providing for the automatic striking out of an action for failure to request a hearing date within the period specified by the rules was not analogous to a peremptory order of the court nor was a plaintiff who had failed to comply with the automatic directions so as to suffer automatic strike out to be treated as though he were guilty of contumacious disobedience to a court order.

Where, therefore, a plaintiff's action was automatically struck out by operation of that rule, his commencement of a fresh action claiming the same relief against the same defendants within the limitation period did not amount to an abuse of the court's process.

The Court of Appeal so held:

(i) allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, Charles Gardner, from Judge Cox, at Lambeth County Court who had struck out his action against the defendants, Southwark London Borough Council and Walter Lawrence Management Ltd, for damages for negligence and breach of statutory duty as an abuse of the court's process;

(ii) allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, Patricia King, from Judge Simpson, at the Mayor's and City of London County Court, who had struck out her personal injury action against the defendants, East Cambridgeshire District Council and Flanders Brothers Ltd, as an abuse of the court's process;

(iii) granting leave to appeal and allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, Pamela Thompson, executrix of the estate of the late Alan Thompson, from Mr Assistant Recorder Everall, QC, at Southampton County Court who had struck out an action commenced within the limitation period for damages for personal injuries against the defendants, Wickens Building Group Ltd, as an abuse of the court's process.

In each case, following the automatic strike out of the plaintiff's action under Order 17, rule 11(9), a second action, claiming the same relief against the same defendants had been commenced within the limitation period.

First action: Mr Walter Ayles, QC, and Mr Alan Smith for the plaintiff, Mr Victor Levene for the defendants.

Second action: Mr Guy Mansfield, QC, and Mr David Westcott, neither of whom appeared, for the plaintiff, Mr Andrew Miller for the first defendants.

Third action: Mr Guy Mansfield, QC and Mr David Westcott for the plaintiff, Mr Dermot O'Brien, QC and Mr Martin Porter for the defendants.

LORD JUSTICE WAITE referred, in the first case, to Mr Ayles's submission that the analogy drawn between failure to comply with the automatic directions and disobedience to a peremptory order of the court was false: the two were not comparable and that, although the court always retained a discretion to restrain a second action on the ground of abuse, that was a sanction reserved for exceptional cases.

By contrast Mr Levene had argued that the automatic directions machinery introduced by Order 17, rule 11 was a novelty in English jurisprudence and had been heralded as a measure intended to bring to a halt the wasteful delay that therefore it should be given at every opportunity the teeth it was intended to have.

He had urged that to allow opportunities for bringing the second action would be seriously to undermine the severity of what was intended to be a stern measure.

His Lordship preferred Mr Ayles's submission. No contumacious conduct and no contempt or defiance of the court's orders was involved in the process of suffering an automatic strike out of proceedings. The circumstances might show dilatoriness or lack of excuse such as to disqualify a plaintiff from having the action reinstated on the principles approved in *Rastin v British Steel plc* [1994] 1 WLR 732.

But that was a long way from saying that such a shortcoming

amounted to disobedience or defiance such as occurred in failure to comply with an unrescinded order.

In the former case the mere march of time past the milestones of the automatic directions programme had deprived the plaintiff of his action.

In the latter case the court made an order specifically addressed to the plaintiff, demanding performance of a step which, if not taken, would result in a contempt of court and became the subject of the punitive sanction of dismissal of the suit.

The discretion to strike out for abuse was never excluded, and, as Mr Ayles had submitted, was retained to deal with exceptional circumstances.

Having reached that conclusion the same result followed in the second and third cases.

LORD JUSTICE OTTON agreed.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS, agreeing, said that if a plaintiff whose first action had been automatically struck out under Order 17, rule 11(9), was subject to a costs order and brought a second action within the limitation period, it was open to the defendant to seek an order staying the second action until the costs of the first action had been met.

That was not a ground on which the plaintiff could be precluded from bringing the second action, but it might afford grounds for restraining and/or breach of statutory duty as an abuse of the court's process.

Solicitors: Gordon, Dore & Wain, Walsworth; Woolley Morris & Kennedy, Sidcup and Greenwoods.

Russell Jones & Walker, Pretty, Ipswich.

Southampton & Bassett, Southampton; C. A. Norris, Ringwood.

Meaning of 'deliver'

Lightfoot v National Westminster Bank plc

Roberts v British Telecommunications plc

Roberts v Holmes

Before Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Waite and Lord Justice Otton
(Judgment December 18)

The word "deliver" bore the same meaning in Order 9, rule 2(6) and Order 17, rule 11(1) of the County Court Rules 1981, and signified the lodging by the defendant of his defence to the court.

It was to be contrasted with the use of the word "send" in Order 9, rule 2(7), relating to the obligation of the proper officer of the court to send out a copy of the defence on to the plaintiff.

Accordingly, the commencement of the automatic directions timetable was to be calculated by reference to the defendant's delivery of the defence to the court, not by reference to a two-stage process, perfected when the proper officer of the court fulfilled his obligation.

The Court of Appeal so held:

(i) allowing an appeal by the defendant, National Westminster Bank plc, from Judge Simpson, at the Mayor's and City of London County Court, who had held that the action by the plaintiff, Pauline Lightfoot, had not been struck out;

(ii) allowing an appeal by the defendant, British Telecommunications plc, from Judge Simpson, at the Mayor's and City of London County Court, who had held that the action by the plaintiff, Pauline Lightfoot, had not been struck out;

(iii) allowing an appeal by the defendant, British Telecommunications plc, from Judge Simpson, at the Mayor's and City of London County Court, who had held that the action by the plaintiff, Pauline Lightfoot, had not been struck out;

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FILM 1

Nicolas Cage drinks himself to oblivion (and an Oscar?) in *Leaving Las Vegas*

FILM 2

... while **Michelle Pfeiffer** works miracles on inner-city kids in the rose-tinted *Dangerous Minds*

THE TIMES ARTS

FILM 3

Steven Soderbergh twists the film noir genre into a skein of puzzles in *The Underneath*

FILM 4

... and there are plenty of thrills, of a less subtle kind, in *Mute Witness*, set in Moscow

Geoff Brown drinks deep of Mike Figgis's study of alcoholic despair, and goes back to school with Michelle Pfeiffer

Bottled up, bottle open, bottling out

First introduced wobbling down a Los Angeles supermarket aisle and filling his trolley with booze, Nicolas Cage begins *Leaving Las Vegas* the way he means to go on. He is stewed. His walk, talk and gestures tell us this; so does the way he later manhandles his car. Already short of ready cash, he loses his scriptwriting job, ransacks his bank account, burns possessions and heads for the Nevada pleasure domes. "I came here," he says, "to drink myself to death." And he succeeds, bottle pressed to his lips, stripped down to the stubble and sinews that filmgoers know only too well.

The single-mindedness of Cage's character is matched by the director's. After wobbling a bit himself with *Mr Jones* and a redundant remake of *The Browning Version*, Mike Figgis re-establishes his Hollywood credentials as the English director who does things differently. No frills; no happy endings; just lashings of sleazy atmosphere, moody music and a small story pursued to the bitter end. The reverse of "feelgood" cinema.

Only two characters matter: Cage's Ben Sanderson and Elisabeth Shue's prostitute Sera, another vulnerable soul who offers support and love. Figgis's script is so spare that it denies both of them any previous history. We never know why their demons have taken up residence; they just have.

Two consequences flow from this. Since no easy explanations are peddled, we are encouraged not to judge their actions. Sera herself never says "Tut tut" nor hides bottles; she accepts that Ben has chosen perdition. This is unusual in a Hollywood movie about a social problem; and it allows Figgis to peer closely, movingly at times, into the alcoholic state.

The streamlined script — from a novel by John O'Brien, who followed his own self-destructive path and died one month before shooting started — also increases the performers' burden. As in previous roles Cage throws himself headlong into the physical requirements of acting drunk. The eyes pop out from sockets; the hands shake. Speech comes in torn fragments. The relaxed air he maintains in comedies pokes through, too, warming the portrayal. Shue works her own corner well, creating in Sera a mixture of Good Samaritan and a trapped, yearning lover.

Figgis views the Vegas landscape with curious eyes. Where *Showgirls* opted for neon pomp, Figgis plunges us into this seedy world with slow dissolves and fade-ins. However, the film ultimately suffers from claustrophobia. Its

Leaving Las Vegas
Warner West End, 18, 110 mins
Nicolas Cage gets spectacularly drunk
Dangerous Minds
Odeon West End, 15, 99 mins
Michelle Pfeiffer brings magic to the inner cities
The Underneath
MGM Shaftesbury Ave, 15, 99 mins
Fascinating puzzle from Steven Soderbergh
Mute Witness
Warner West End, 18, 96 mins
Ebullient thriller set in Moscow
Persuasion
Barbican, U, 107 mins
Balm from Jane Austen

should rush to *Dangerous Minds*. Audiences across America certainly have; this timid tale about Michelle Pfeiffer working her magic on inner-city kids has taken four times as much money as *The Usual Suspects*, released at the same time. It is a plot many people already know, especially if their memories stretch to *Blackboard Jungle* or *To Sir, With Love*.

A new teacher, a former Marine, plunges into an unruly class. "Rejects from hell," she calls them. After failing with traditional tactics and tweeds, she wears jeans, offers bribes, and analyses the lyrics of *Mr Tambourine Man*. The class contains the expected types: hardened hood veterans, the bright kid who jeopardises her chances by getting pregnant. The film's point, however, is that every kid has a chance, provided his or her attention is caught and energy channelled away from violence.

The message is well-meant, and the story, implausibilities acknowledged, happens to be based on truth: LouAnne Johnson, Pfeiffer's character, is also the author of the source material, a memoir called *My Posse Don't Do Homework*. To audiences eager for good news about themselves, the film could obviously be comforting. Others will find it rose-tinted and predictable.

The glamorous Pfeiffer convinces neither as a former Marine nor an inner-city teacher, though she gets ten out of ten for trying. There are

small focus and Ben's downward spiral leaves audiences with little to look forward to except more of the same, and you long occasionally for someone to call out "Time, gentlemen, please!" But since Figgis is offering something not usually on sale, a pessimistic Hollywood mood piece closer to art than entertainment — only the most short-sighted should pass the film by.

Anyone fainting for lack of a plot in *Leaving Las Vegas*



What time is now? Alison Elliott in *The Underneath*, whose maze of flashbacks is "endlessly fascinating"



Make his a treble: Nicolas Cage stars in *Leaving Las Vegas*, Mike Figgis's claustrophobic study of two lost souls in the Nevada desert town

fewer marks for John N. Smith, an experienced director from Canadian television, making his American debut. He was hired on the basis of *The Boys of St Vincent*, widely praised for its penetrating treatment of abusive behaviour at a Catholic orphanage. Once he reaches Hollywood, log descends.

The eagle-eyed will observe that Steven Soderbergh's *The Underneath* is a Populist Pictures production. Soderbergh is scarcely a populist, and wide acceptance of his new feature will probably be hindered by the layers of flashbacks, fancy camera angles and other displays of rampant style. The movie, a remake of the late 1940s film noir *Cris Cross*, still grips, though more as puzzle than thriller.

We begin with the unfolding robbery of an armoured car carrying bank notes galore. Flashbacks emerge to fill in the story: their colouring and film grain is different, and in the strand placed furthest in time, Peter Gallagher usefully wears a beard. He plays a wastrel who returns home to the nowhere of Austin, Texas, and tries to pick up the torch with his former wife, currently attached to a reptilian nightclub owner.

By fracturing the plot so much, Soderbergh ensures the robbery never builds into the expected set piece. Nor do the scenes between Gallagher and his old flame (Alison Elliott) reach the heat that rose between surly Burt Lancaster and sultry Yvonne De Carlo in the original. Soderbergh's interest lies instead in the confusions, the moral or immoral choices, opened up by the story's twists.

Camera pyrotechnics, razor-sharp dialogue and accomplished playing make the film's puzzle endlessly fascinating. Nobody is better than Gallagher at polishing a wastrel with charm, which is just

what his ambiguous hero requires. Smaller parts, too, are etched with flair. Soderbergh may still not have topped his debut, *sex, lies and videotape*, but *The Underneath* proves again that he is incapable of making a boring film. Just do not expect to be perched on the seat's edge, knuckles whitening.

Mute Witness, by contrast, straps you on an emotional rollercoaster. You shake with fear as the heroine, a mute special-effects girl on a Moscow movie set, faces some new torment after witnessing the shooting of a snuff film. The

next moment you laugh at buffoonish comedy; then you guffaw at clunky dialogue, a thrill that misfires, or the sudden emergence of a "mystery guest star". The next scene you quake again, heart in mouth.

The man responsible for this crazy, good-bad movie is Anthony Walker, a British commercials director who was trained at the Munich Film School (some of his German classmates are behind the camera with him). His script was first set in Chicago; then economy dictated his scumbag characters do their business in

Russia. It was a smart move: even though ex-communist crime lords have fast become movie clichés, enough novelty persists in the film studio setting to ward off yawns. After spending the first half cowering, Russian actress Marina Sudina shows refreshing pluck; and playing mute, she is spared the worst of Walker's dialogue. Good fun, though debilitating: at the end you do not walk from the cinema, you stagger.

Persuasion, BBC Films' adaptation of Jane Austen's last novel, receives a brief, welcome cinema airing after two

television transmissions last year. You can snort perhaps at the hand-held camera waltzes favoured at times by director Roger Michell. You may wish Austen's story of love lost and recaptured was not pushed through at quite such a lick. But you cannot fault the film's fresh spirit, sensitivity, nor wonderful cast. Amanda Root, as Anne Elliot, the daughter facing a life on the shelf, is heart and soul. Hers is a face that the camera loves, for it picks up every rustle of hope or disappointment and basks in her smile. This is the most civilised film in town.

Good news for night owls

THIS week the House of Commons has debated the BBC World Service funding cuts and the Lords, as is their curious wont, used a debate on the new Broadcasting Bill to mutter about the amount of sport going to satellite television channels, which is not actually covered by the Bill.

But outside the corridors of notional power there is real news for real listeners. After several years of hints, rumours, hopes and false dawns, I can confirm that Radio 3 is to become a 24-hour network from April 1 this year.

This has been a cherished ambition of Nicholas Kenyon.

RADIO: Peter Barnard looks forward to all-night programming for 'real listeners' on Radio 3

Radio 3's Controller, since he took over from John Drummond in 1992. Kenyon received provisional approval from John Birt, the Director-General, last November and yesterday Kenyon's team met at Broadcasting House to finalise details.

The confirmation of a round-the-clock Radio 3 is good news for those night owls among us who until now have had only Classic FM (no mean compensation, I may say) as a buttress against the nocturnal forces of rock 'n' roll. The wee hours have too long been an oasis of Oasis.

Classic FM has proven that there is a night-time audience for serious music and I argued long ago that Radio 3 should have turned into a 24-hour network before Classic was on

the air. At the time, accountants ruled. Broadcasting House and anyone arguing for more programming could expect to be certified.

Times change. I understand that Kenyon has secured an extra £500,000 a year to finance night-time broadcasting, the money coming from economies elsewhere in the BBC. This is small beer in Radio 3's annual budget of £56 million but extra money for any network is an achievement in this era.

The night service will be run by Donald McLeod, now head of presentation. That in turn means that Radio 3 listeners who have been complaining about the network's presentational style can expect to have their needs attended to by McLeod's successor, who has

yet to be named. Start writing now, is my advice.

The schedules for Radio 3 during the night are not finalised but they are unlikely to offer wall-to-wall music, unfortunately. Schools broadcasting is likely to take up the hours between 3am and 5am but at least the hours either side will now service a real, if small, market.

Increased airtime will be good news for the five BBC orchestras, which will be asked to contribute more live and recorded music. A few years ago several of the orchestras faced closure or merger but savings elsewhere enabled that threat to recede. Now it has the chance to become a distant memory.

All of which is in stark contrast to stories circulating predicting the demise of Radio 3, apparently based on an "internal document" discussing the network's long-term viability. Clearly Radio 3 is fighting back... and about time, too.

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■ OPERA 1

Covent Garden presents its best face in a powerful staging of *The Midsummer Marriage*



■ OPERA 2

... and English National Opera launches a new home for experimental work in Hackney

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ MUSIC 1

Sir Colin Davis and the LSO set off on Britain's first cycle of Bruckner symphonies



■ MUSIC 2

Mitsuko Uchida brings a typically silken touch to a chamber recital with the Carmina Quartet

New opera 'hothouse' opens in the East End

After months of adverse publicity, English National Opera has been overtaken in the doom and gloom stakes by the beleaguered Royal Opera House. Some at ENO will doubtless be relieved to see the critical spotlight shift. Most, however, will regret the way in which it has distracted attention from one piece of operatic good news: the launch this week of the ENO Works, an innovative venture bringing together the company's Contemporary Opera Studio and Baylis Programme in a new home, the old Shoreditch Library building in Hackney, east London.

Although the new facility will not be fully operational until March, the ENO Works will throw open its doors to local residents on Saturday. As Mark-Anthony Turnage, ENO's composer-in-association and the project's director, puts it: "Opera may be a dirty word at present, but the open day will enable outsiders to see that we are pretty normal." Visitors will recognise little of their former public library, and find instead rehearsal spaces and office accommodation for a company that in the past has been forced to squat in thoroughly unsuitable venues.

This handsome turn-of-the-century building (Grade II listed, the work of Henry Thomas Hare) has been transformed with local support and as part of the area's regeneration: ENO has stumped up only £30,000 of the renovation's £130,000 total cost and is

English National Opera is making a fresh attempt to nurture new talent. John Allison reports

leaving the premises from Hackney Council.

Almost every aspect of ENO's work will benefit — orchestra and chorus will rehearse there, and the Baylis Programme will not only have a permanent base but be able to "adopt" the community for its education and outreach projects. But most exciting of all are the prospects for the Contemporary Opera Studio, which Turnage feels was previously "stuck on the side of the company, without total commitment. Now we've got core funding and a building."

Together with the artistic administrator, Sarah Hickson, Turnage will run the studio as a hothouse for the nurturing of new talent, bringing together all those involved in the creation of operas — composers, writers, producers, designers and performers — in a flexible, friendly environment.

Turnage, who is currently working on two new operas, enjoyed rare success with the premiere of his *Greek* at the 1988 Munich Biennale, itself a shining example to the studio.

No fewer than three separate productions of *Greek* are planned internationally this year, but he is acutely aware of the high failure rate of contemporary operas. "I had a great experience when I wrote *Greek*, but a lot of composers writing their first opera have a really bad experience. We want to stop that happening. We want to support new work, so that people won't get to the stage five weeks before the premiere and find themselves in the middle of a disaster."

"We won't necessarily be putting on all the new operas ourselves — we'll be 'work-shopping' things for other companies. Hopefully it will produce better operas." Projects already under way include music-theatre works by Julian Anderson, Martin Butler, Julian Grant, David Sawyer and Param Vir.

Turnage stresses the value of practical experience. "During my residency with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the try-outs allowed me to improve my pieces 100 per cent. This is a facility we're going to have in the studio — things that don't work will be ironed out long before the premiere. This is the way I've worked on *Twice Through the Heart* — his chamber opera commissioned for next year's Aldeburgh Festival — and I hope it will be a model for the whole of the studio. I've already had workshops with Sally Burgess, and basically rewritten it. This business is not only about composers, but about singers too, and breaking down barriers where there is an enormous amount of suspicion."

The rate at which new works appear and disappear reflects the unhealthy pressure on young composers to produce their first opera. "Too many people have been commissioned. I don't think there are loads of born opera composers, and the defunct Garden Venture was careless in commissioning so many. Not all composers have a sense of drama, but you still find them writing their own librettos and adapting their concert music for the theatre. Many set the same authors — Lorca is one always turning up — and a lot are based in the late 19th century, with little for audiences to latch onto."

With Steven Berkoff's *Greek*, Turnage found an author that few had set before and subject-matter of contemporary resonance. "Something did happen with *Greek*. The audience wasn't just told — there are people out there. Of course, ticket prices mean that audiences are all of a certain class. It really infuriates me, and I hope we can change all that working in Hackney."

JOHN ALLISON



Made in heaven: Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*, once critically reviled, is gloriously vindicated in Graham Vick's new production

So all you need is love

Rodney Milnes applauds a Royal Opera production of Tippett's buoyant masterpiece

Amid all the hoo-ha surrounding *The House*, it was good to be reminded that what matters in the end at Covent Garden is what happens on stage and in the pit, and on Tuesday it was shown to matter very much indeed — one of the most astonishing and original operas written this century was renewed and restored for our time. For someone who had attended performances during the first run in 1955, and been dazzled by them, to witness the audience rising to acclaim the spry, eternally youthful, 91-year-old composer, Sir Michael Tippett, was extraordinarily stirring.

In 1955, *The Midsummer Marriage* was considered, to put it mildly, "difficult" — indeed, the scorn heaped upon libretto and music in the press makes painful reading today. Yet for all the weird mixture of Shaw, Eliot, Jung, Greek and Eastern mythology in the text, there seemed to be — to a teenager at least — a narrative thread as strong and logical as that of *The Magic Flute*. Yes, love, society, humanity itself, have to be tested, and the journey's up, down and through the elements made perfect sense.

What it may be difficult for teenagers today to take on board was the feeling of renewal the opera engendered in the 1950s: there had been two world wars and unimaginable horror, but this was

all part of a new start. The optimism, the sheer positiveness of Tippett's vision buoyed us all up no end, and the only shadow falling across Tuesday's first night was the nagging reminder that the start has faltered, the old order has fought back, and the opera is still not quite a period piece. "A loser sponging off the state," says the businessman King Fisher of his prospective son-in-law.

Good heavens, we still talk like that. Tippett's opera has not exactly been neglected in the intervening decades: all our national companies have staged it and this was the Royal Opera's third new production. Yet with each fresh encounter one is bowled over afresh by the mind-boggling exuberance of the music, its richness of melody and fastidious beauty of instrumentation. To be bowled over again in the company of Bernard Haitink was privilege indeed: he and his magnificent orchestra wallowed in the richness of texture, the grandeur of vision, lingering lovingly over the sheer beauty of the music

without ever quite losing its forward momentum. The score was performed without cuts and the four hours in the theatre felt like half that time.

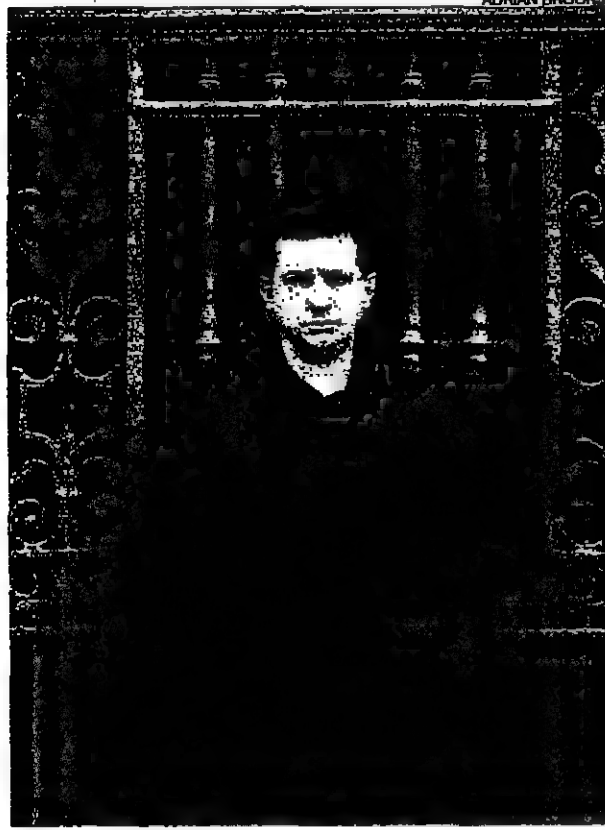
And this is one of the last great chorus operas, reminiscent of *Boris Godunov* or *Boccanegra*. Their music is difficult but hugely rewarding, and for the daring, energy and accuracy with which Terry Edwards's singers threw themselves at the notes no praise could be too high. Chorus and orchestra — the nuts and bolts of any opera house. The only problem with the notes no praise could be too high. Chorus and orchestra — the nuts and bolts of any opera house. The only problem with the notes no praise could be too high. Chorus and orchestra — the nuts and bolts of any opera house. The only problem with the notes no praise could be too high.

Graham Vick's production and Paul Brown's decor are clean-cut and to the point, in helpful counterpoint, you could argue, to the baroque exuberance of the music. Journeys to heaven and hell are imaginatively handled and the

dramatic revelation of the lovers in a lotus flower is bewitchingly beautiful. I wondered only if Ron Howell's respectable, abstract choreography could not with advantage have been more specific. In its depiction of hunter and hunted — it certainly did not frighten me as much as it frightened Bella and Jack. But Vick's direction of the chorus had a dangerously anarchic edge to it: his third-act picnic looked like a Glyndebourne interval that had got slightly out of hand — spot on.

The soloists gave their all. Stephen O'Mara taking advantage of not being hustled by Haitink to sing Mark's music carefully and beautifully; Cheryl Barker sounding a little tense at first, but settling down to negotiate Jennifer's virtuosic lines with aplomb; Lillian Watson and Christopher Ventris giving really witty performances as Bella and Jack (there are funny lines and you are allowed to laugh); Eiddwen Harri and Peter Rose were sturdy Ancients and Catherine Wyn-Rogers got a lot of Mme Sosostri's words across as well as singing with glowing gravity. And the one and only John Tomlinson, of course, sang tirelessly and hurled all King Fisher's words inescapably at the audience.

We needed *Midsummer Marriage* in 1955, we need it now, and the absolutely essential Royal Opera has delivered the goods. Don't miss.



Turnage "This business is not only about composers, but about singers too, and breaking down barriers"

CONCERTS: The first British Bruckner symphonic cycle launched at the Barbican; plus chamber recitals

Start of an epic journey

LSO/Davis
Barbican

sense of Mozartian order: so much so that a finale to his Ninth eluded him. But in Davis's performance the work felt complete. Even though he pulled phrases around in the visionary Adagio, one sensed the serene affirmation of the composer's "farewell to life". Davis allowed the titanic

opening movement to breathe and presented the increasingly tortured arguments with clarity.

Mozart, represented by his Violin Concerto No 3 in G, was served less well, in spite of the stylish playing Davis drew from the LSO. The orchestral opening established a genial mixture of wit and charm that the soloist, the diminutive Midori, was unable to match. She gave a polished performance and seems incapable of ugly tone, but her self-conscious approach to the music was wide of the stylistic mark. Hardly a phrase passed without a teasing drop to pianissimo, and the Adagio was droopily sentimental. The real romanticism of Bruckner came as welcome relief.

JOHN ALLISON

Touching without intimacy

Carmina Quartet
Queen Elizabeth Hall

The producer Graham Vick is said to have balked at the bare back-sides advertising Covent Garden's production of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. No one, as far as I am aware, has yet complained of the combination of shapely female back and string instrument which announces the International Chamber Music Season at the South Bank. Does this really pull in the crowds? Certainly, the QEH was full for the appearance of the Carmina Quartet and Mitsuko Uchida in a substantial programme of late Schubert and Brahms.

I have to confess that it's some time since I heard a

modern string quartet live, and I found myself having to readjust to the sound in the same way that, say five or six years ago, it took a while to settle into the period-instrument approach: the Quatuor Mosaïques has changed all that. There is a histrionic quality to the modern style of string playing (which stems largely from fast vibrato and high string tension) that worked all right in the Brahms Piano Quintet in the second half of the programme, but was much less successful in

Schubert's G major quartet. Perhaps it was because Schubert's last quartet, for all its visionary, progressive qualities, still clings to its Classical inheritance in style and, above all, texture, and the Carmina Quartet's performance seemed overemphatic and their interpretation unsettled. That said, it must be difficult to come cold to this strange, tonally ambiguous work: dramatic and disturbing by design, elegiac yet elusive by nature. There was plenty of energy and commitment but I longed for cleaner textures and a more elegant, subtle approach. Probably the under-the-microscope acoustic of the QEH did not help (attempts had been made to make a more intimate setting), but I found their overall sound at times rough-edged and not always perfectly balanced.

Brahms's Piano Quintet in F minor is no less demanding a work, but in the company of Uchida, and with the Schubert behind them, the string players quickly established a different level of interpretation. They paced the work well. Uchida brought out perfectly the luminous quality of Brahms's piano-writing: some people might have preferred a heavier touch but I found that the way in which she stroked the keys achieved an ideal integration with the strings and added depth to the performance as a whole.

GERALD LARNER

TESS KNIGHTON

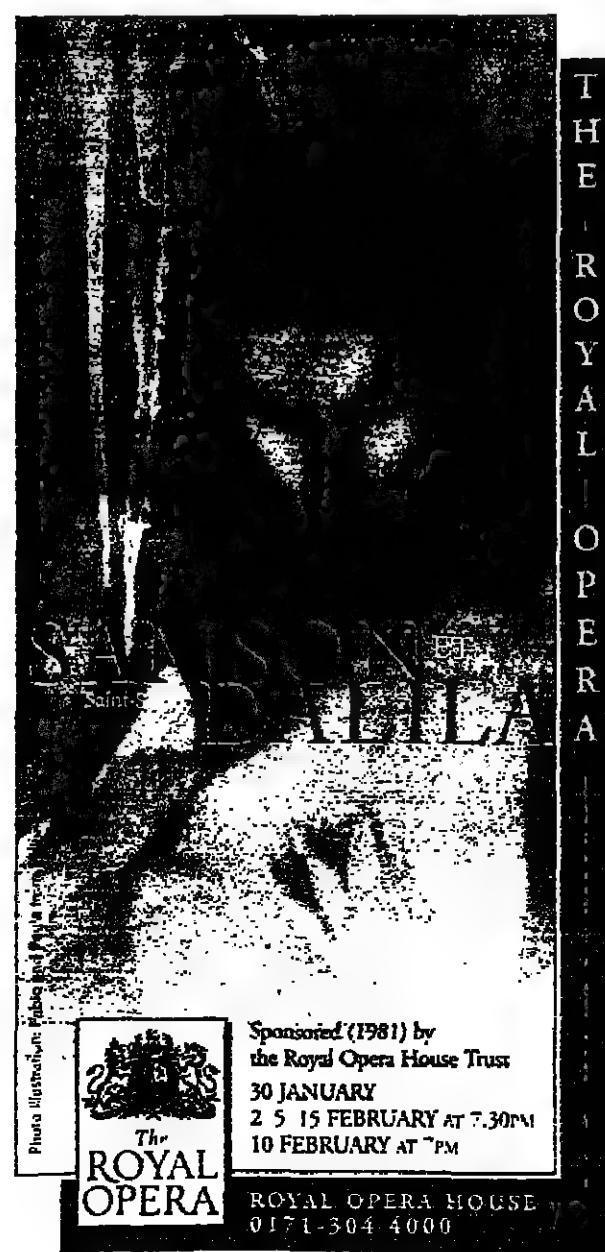
Youth can string Beethoven along

Vellinger Quartet
Manchester

as the intermediary between them. So there was no question of Mendelssohn emerging from his Quartet in A minor, Op 13, as the teenage fogey imitating late Beethoven and, except in the delightfully fresh *Intermezzo*, concealing his youthful personality in searching counterpoint and profound reflection. On the contrary, he was presented as a musician not so much repressed by his admiration of Beethoven's Quartet in A minor, Op 132, as inspired by his affection for it.

Even so, it was taking a risk — and restricting style and material — to include that same Quartet in A minor, Op 132, in the same programme. The danger was not that Mendelssohn would seem callow by comparison but that late Beethoven would sound dry. Indeed, there was a lack of imagination in the approach to the early part of the work. But something happened in the *Molto Adagio*, first in the quicker D major sections and eventually in the Lydian deliberation itself. It assumed more meaning as it became more abstract.

The turning point of the interpretation was in the next movement, in the leader's suddenly dramatic performance of the *Adagio*. While the finale allowed some of the pressure to leak away it did indicate that youth and authentic late Beethoven are not incompatible.



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VENUE: Until Saturday at the Drill Hall, WCI

Hilary Finch on how rhythm and melody can help young deaf children to speak

Feeling for the sound of music

In a tiny mews, a filling as it were between two sandwich bars in a side street midway between Euston and King's Cross stations, pomp and circumstance are in the air. *Land of Hope and Glory* blasts out from the loudspeakers and a three-year-old called Ahi proudly beats her drum to the march. She starts as Elgar's great crescendo raves up, and she stops when the music ceases. She can hear only the deeper tones, and when congratulated on sharing her drum, she tunes in to the vowels of human speech.



Beethoven would approve: music therapy is now an important part of education for hearing-impaired children

Before the deaf virtuoso percussionist Evelyn Glennie, the idea that music was not only a viable but a vital ingredient in the education of hearing-impaired children was considered at best as eccentric, at worst as totally incongruous. But Beethoven himself may have endorsed a positive view if there had been ears to hear him. For the range of vibrations and frequencies which can be experienced by the use of carefully selected instruments is now acknowledged in the development of the rhythm and melody of speech and language.

Christopher Place, Britain's first speech, language and hearing centre for babies and children under five, was opened in December by Evelyn Glennie. Its miniature furniture and gently curved, pastel-tinted walls are as bright and new as the research which motivated its existence. The years between birth and five have long been a silent void for hearing-impaired children and their parents, as far as mutual support and therapeutic activity have been concerned. And as such awareness has increased so, paradoxically, have resources decreased. This was the force behind Christopher Place: this, and the heightened awareness that background noise, television and the speed at which children are now required to communicate, are

possible contributory factors in the ever-growing number of speech and language-delayed children. The chairman Andrew Jay, who has a hearing-impaired child of his own, visited a similar centre in America and determined that a centre offering a full nursery curriculum, together with interdisciplinary therapeutic intervention, should be provided in Britain. Christopher Place became a registered charity in 1991, formed a board of trustees, and started four years of fundraising. The breakthrough came when an anonymous foundation offered to set up custom-built accommodation. Three small, light floors open into flower-filled, sound-proofed rooms, each one with semi-circular tables for child, teacher and parent.

Angela Harding points out that testing has also revealed that several children with speech and language delay have made six to eight-week advances in just a fortnight. She attributes this to the use of appropriate language levels, integrated with music and dance, and to a programme of close follow-up work and linking with parents and local authorities. Referral to Christopher Place—sometimes from as far away as Manchester or Wales—is through paediatricians, GPs, health visitors and, above all, the parental bush telegraph. Funding can be private, from local authorities, or from the centre's own Child Sponsorship Fund: it is Christopher Place's "fervent hope" that no child who requires therapy will be refused.

A gala concert at the Savoy Theatre, London, on Sunday marks the 20th anniversary of the Beethoven Fund and proceeds will be divided between Christopher Place and The Elizabeth Foundation in Portsmouth. Tickets are £10 to £100, from 0171-838 8888. The fund was set up by the Beethoven Society, which is at Christopher Place, Chalfont Street, London NW1 1UF. 0171-383 3834; fax 0171-383 3099.

ALTHOUGH some contemporary mime is text-based, even in such cases the overriding concern is to create scenes the eye can register. Thus Raimund Hoghe, in this 90-minute piece from Germany, sometimes stands at a lectern and reads accounts of deaths and persecution, while the voice of Joseph Schmidt, a popular tenor from the 1930s, is heard warbling his songs at regular intervals. But it is the odd yet simple movements, the silent, uncanny images, that give the work its haunting power.

Meinwärts is a requiem, initially for the doomed Schmidt, whose songs to quote the words of the most famous of them, went round the world but whose

own person: a growth restriction prevented Schmidt performing in opera, and in the first moments of this show Hoghe, also a short man, casually reveals the distortion of his right shoulder.

On a dark stage, lit only by a cluster of red night-lights at one corner, Hoghe is seen in silhouette, sitting with his back towards us. A flying trapeze is faintly visible. An assistant walks on and douses the lights, and Hoghe can

be dimly seen walking to the trapeze, where he strips off his black suit and, now with his naked, misshapen back to us, hoists himself onto the trapeze. Schmidt, meanwhile, is singing a Donizetti aria.

This is the first of a number of weird but magical juxtapositions. He dances in the dark with two small torches illuminating random scraps of the stage; he drowns himself with coloured lightbulbs, like a necklace of jewels.

Perhaps you need to be in a special mood to respond to these curious, brisquely introduced episodes, but once in that mood, there is beauty, gravity and wonder to be found.

JEREMY KINGSTON

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Andrew Roberts examines Churchill's wartime advice, and finds a hint of new Labour in the Conservatives' postwar wanderings

When Winston Churchill and Reginald Maudling sat down to write the Leader's Speech for the Tory party conference of 1947 it slowly dawned on Maudling that, despite his assurances to R. A. Butler that spring, Churchill had not actually read the Industrial Charter, the crucial declaration of party policy industrial matters. So Maudling handed him a paragraph summarising it — centralisation, high employment produced by government, strong trade unions, no denationalisation, equal pay, increased spending on training, joint production councils, co-partnership schemes — and Churchill said he did not agree with a word of it. "Well, sir," answered the hapless speech writer, "this is what the conference has adopted." "Oh well," said Churchill, "leave it in."

For all the possible self-parody in the tale, it could serve as the leitmotif for the postwar age of Churchill and Eden. Inattention to detail, lack of interest in domestic issues, laziness over party policy and a general drift towards social democracy led by Butler and Harold Macmillan. Soon after the charter was adopted, Macmillan

Drifting away from victory

THE AGE OF
CHURCHILL AND
EDEN
By John Ramsden
Longman, £55
CHURCHILL AND THE
PROF
By Thomas Wilson
Cassell, £25

wrote to Butler congratulating him and saying that its right-wing opponents, such as Waldron Smithers, Sir Herbert Williams and Ralph Ascheton, thought it "milk and water socialism, which perhaps it is, but... there does not seem to me much harm in this".

John Ramsden's book, the latest edition of the long-running and excellent Longman History of the Conservative Party, is a well researched, objective study of the locus years when the Tory Wets took over the party from the



Churchill's humour finds favour with Anthony Eden at the 1953 Conservative Party conference

Chamberlaines and made it a social democratic rather than authentically Tory organisation. If you want to read the charter, whose application under Butskellism did so much damage to

competitiveness, productivity and sterling, just wait for new Labour's election manifesto.

One of Butler's braver ideas — though not one which he was in the end willing to make a resigna-

tion issue — was the propagation of Operation Robot, a scheme to make sterling convertible in 1952. It was scuppered by Churchill's memories of the Gold Standard debate and the machinations of

his scientific and economic adviser "Prof" Lindemann, Lord Cherwell, the subject of an excellent intellectual biography by his former lieutenant in the Prime Minister's Statistical Office, Thomas Wilson.

Albert Einstein called Lindemann "the last of the great Florentines". Wilson, now Emeritus Professor of Political Economy at Glasgow University, in a book that is more a series of essays than a comprehensive biography, explains why. There was hardly a significant political, scientific or economic issue between 1921 and 1955 on which he was not a convinced and combative campaigner.

Like any expert, he must be judged on results. On the credit side must be his work opposing appeasement, on the anti-Luftwaffe aerial beams, discovering how to save aircraft from spinning out of control (at considerable risk to his own life), helping Jewish scientists to escape

Germany in the 1930s and his defence of the Bomber Command offensive. On the debit side, perhaps, is his support for Morgen-thau's plan to pastoralise Germany, his advocacy of aerial mines, his quarrels with Sir Henry Tizard over radar and almost all his postwar Keynesian economic advice. The man of whom it was originally remarked that he was to the right of Genghis Khan, he relished the politically incorrect, once asking an idealistic colleague: "What is this foolish proposal to abolish hunger?"

Most prime ministers have extra-special advisers. Tom Jones, Sir Horace Wilson, Marcia Falkender and Alan Walters all gave non-departmental advice free of fear and favour. Lindemann, however, who could in Churchill's words "explain to me in lucid, homely terms what the issues were," was the greatest of them all. This book, which takes advantage of the expiry of the 30 and 50-year rules in a way earlier biographies could not, triumphantly succeeds in filling a gap in the intellectual history of the Second World War.

Glad to bear the stamp of lowly origin

Simon Barnes

IN QUEST OF THE
SACRED BABOON:
A Scientist's Journey
By Hans Kummer
Princeton University Press, £20

The proper study of mankind is man. I always thought that Pope's conclusion represented a hopelessly limited view of things. There was a time when I spent every day chasing the same pride of 12: surely the proper study of mankind is lion.

I lived in an ebony glade which I shared with a troop of baboons. The sound of their squabbles and the sight of their peacemaking was an aspect of daily routine, but I did not warm to them. They were my closest relatives in the African bush; perhaps that was why I found them the least sympathetic.

The hamadryas baboon, revered by the Ancient Egyptians and the subject of this absorbing book, is perhaps even more disquieting. The males are much bigger than the females, and wear an elaborate mantle of silky fur, but this reaches barely to the hips "leaving his bottom bare, and to our sensibilities, embarrassingly unprotected... furthermore, the large penis is driven exuberantly erect even by friendly interest and the red hindquarters are resplendent at any time."

Add to this females whose rear ends swell and glow when they become sexually receptive, and it is clear we are entering a minefield of behavioural possibilities.

The study of animal behaviour remains a problem for proper scientists. The search for objectivity too often involves an act of denial: they dare not incline towards the error of sentimentality. Anthropomorphism is seen as the sin of witchcraft: yet all observers know that understanding can only come from sympathy with species, with groups, with individuals.

Kummer's account, translated by M. Ann Biederman-Thorson, of tracking down these elusive animals in the Danakil Desert has a thoroughly enjoyable amount of speculation and subjectivity: for it is the bold personal document of a scientist whose reputation is safe. So why spend your life studying monkeys? Well, we can start with a narrow objective, and ask — as Kummer, Professor of Ethology at the University of Zurich, does — what the hamadryas baboon teaches us about ourselves.

For example, the baboons who live in zoos, under conditions of enforced idleness, liberated from

(or crippled by the removal of) the demands of making a living — finding food, avoiding becoming food — have developed a measurably more elaborate, perhaps decadent, social life.

One group developed what Kummer calls "the mantle cult", in which the lone adult male's furry cloak became an object of something very like veneration: constant and obsessive grooming of the male by the rest of the group became a major part of daily life: something neither Kummer nor any other observer has seen in the wild. In this we can see something like symbol, religion, and its development in "civilised" (zoo-like) life — if we wish.

But Kummer finds the profoundest joys in what he terms "the Adam experience", the illusion of "an existence before humans had appeared and began to change everything". This is precisely what I felt myself, when I sat silent in the forest with a bushbuck unaware and five yards from my foot.

But he still savours "the zoologist's dream of being accepted by wild animals, nourished by Kipling's Mowgli and Lofting's Dr Dolittle". These were the heroes of my own youth, although I really wanted to be Bagheera, the black panther. It is part of the dream of improving the human condition by attempting escape from it: to seek wisdom beyond species, among our fellow-mammals.

Not for what they can teach us about ourselves, but for their own sake. And not for the sake of the objective gathering of facts and observations, either. Kummer writes: "Pure research has its origin in the subjective, in a human being's almost unconscious but powerful longing to feel at home in the greater order of things."

Religion, he says, is the oldest path for the search. Kummer happened to choose the way of the sacred baboon: why not? The proper study of mankind is life.



The hamadryas in the Tutankhamun treasure (1940 BC)



The handwritten scrolls of the Torah, demonstrating the need to preserve Jewish tradition (from Symbols of Judaism by Maro-Alain Ouaknin, Editions Assouline, £35)

The purpose of survival

Julia Neuberger

VANISHING DIASPORA
The Jews in Europe
since 1945
By Bernard Wasserstein
Hamish Hamilton, £20

Jews went there on the Silk Road, and a community persisted for eight centuries before merging into the surrounding culture. We European Jews will also persist, by analogy, but will eventually forget why we still carry out a few Jewish rituals, and gradually assimilate completely into the surrounding secularism.

Or will we? I take this intensely personally, as a British Jewess of German origins. Whether we disappear is up to us. Wasserstein suggests some ways out of the apathy, including the replacement, gradually, of Jewish religious observance, clearly on the decline, with Jewish "culture".

THIS WAS first suggested seriously by the French Jewish intellectual Richard Marienstras, who argued that we could be Jews without necessarily being Jewish by religion or by identification with Zionist nationalism, the two main ways we have identified ourselves since the Second World War. His answer lay in a renewal of Jewish

languages (Wasserstein also argues that one cannot have "culture" without language) such as Yiddish and Ladino: in the study of Jewish history; and in a "cultural politics of the diaspora".

Wasserstein does not believe this is likely, though he gives it some credence. I believe it is possible, though languages will be relatively unimportant. If we can get ourselves away from an obsession merely with surviving, and begin to see a purpose in our survival, if we find messages in Judaism about the nature of family, community, and society to be shared with others irrespective of our personal belief in God or lack of it, then we might be able to create a "cultural politics

of the diaspora". If we can also welcome those non-Jews who marry our children, drawing them into our community rather than seeking to deny them, we might both make a stab at keeping our numbers up, and increase our intellectual and moral strength.

For Wasserstein is right when he says, we will not succeed by sectarian Jewish day-school education, despite it being seen as the panacea for all ills by Jewish leaders. The experience of the Roman Catholic Church, with its long history of separate schooling, has not been to increase observance, nor even identification. Nor will we do it by Zionist enthusiasm. The survival, should it happen, has to come out of our own conviction that there is within Judaism — its history, its cultures, its moral values, its religion, any aspect of its being — that which is worth preserving. We cannot maintain identity by bullying our young. But we should be able, in our families and our communal organisations, to enthuse them for something so

exciting intellectually, spiritually and morally that they would wish to seek it for themselves. If the excitement about values is there, then the absence of anti-Semitism, the acceptance in the wider world, will not kill our community by kindness. But if we cannot find anything worthwhile in our heritage, or do not even look, then we will disappear.

THE WORLD from which my family comes, the rich world of German Jewry, was destroyed in hatred. The world in which I have grown up, of liberal tolerant Britain with its acceptance of Jews post-war, has a place for a culturally, religiously and historically diverse group in its midst, which has a contribution to make to the common good. Unlike Wasserstein, I believe that in Britain and France, if our communal leadership were to be braver, more tolerant of those whose Jewish status is dubious, and less willing to give in to those who say we must keep our group "purely Jewish" by dismissing those who intermarry, we could still have a chance of surviving, and prospering, and bringing something of spiritual and moral value into the wider domain.

THE BOOK

THAT ROCKED

THE ESTABLISHMENT

THE NUMBER ONE BESTSELLER

مكتبة من الأصول

The State We're In

WILL HUTTON

The
OUT NO
WI

As the butcher turns to dust

Few novels of this century have taken on the weight of modern myth, but William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is one of them. A tortuous masterpiece about the Bundren family's journey to bury their mother, their lives unraveling while her corpse festers on the back of their cart. Rage, rivalry, illegitimacy, unwanted pregnancy, madness and the brutal elements conjoin to conjure a furious but transcendent vision of the Bundrens, and of the American South that spawned them.

In the hands of an uncertain talent, any reworking of this narrative — and particularly a contemporary, British reworking — would be folly, an invitation to bathe; but Graham Swift's new novel, *Last Orders*, is a triumph, and ultimately redemptive, adaptation of Faulkner's classic. It too, is the tale of a journey to a burial, and in its telling Swift has taken up Faulkner's device of alternating named monologues. The novel is punctuated with more specific debts to its predecessor, both in form and in detail: and yet *Last Orders* is not mere pastiche. A resonant work of art in its own right, it confirms its author as one of his generation's finest, with an imagination of rare immediacy and vitality.

As perhaps befits its Englishness, the novel explores largely the turmoil of an older generation rather than the demons of the young. Four men embark upon a day-trip from Bermondsey to Margate to scatter the ashes of the deceased butcher, Jack Dodds, in accordance with his last request. The youngest among them, his adopted son Vince, is over 40, a flashy car salesman who spurned his father's trade. The other three — Ray "Lucky" Johnson, a man with a knack for the horses; a bellicose fruit and veg stall owner named Lenny Tate; and Vic Tucker, the dignified undertaker — are Jack's closest friends, for whom his death is a reminder that they too are nearing the end of life's road. And yet they set off in Vince's borrowed Mercedes, on a sun-filled morning, in an aura not of doom but of festivity: "like it's something Jack has done for us, so as to make us feel special, so as to give us a treat."

The route to Margate offers unforeseen detours — to Rochester, to the naval memorial at Chatham, to a country hillside in Kent, and to Canterbury Cathedral — and provides each of the travellers with his own winding path of recollection, remorse and reprieve. What emerges is not only the pattern of almost gothic tragedy that has touched them all, but intimations of their entire Cookney world: of small businesses passed from father to son, of Smithfield market at dawn, of hours in the local pub and the betting shop. In this solidity there is both solace and deadening limitation, but every man in the Mercedes has nurtured his share of secret dreams.

The novel offers voice to the absent women, too: to Mandy, Vince's wife and above all to Amy, Jack's widow, who has declined to join the men. "My own journey to make. Their journey and mine... This is where I belong, upstairs on this bus... Neither here nor there, just travelling in between", she reflects, on her way instead to visit



Graham Swift: the deceptive simplicity of his writing only adds to the power of his latest novel

Claire Messud

LAST ORDERS
By Graham Swift
Picador, £15.99

her severely retarded daughter June. June has been the central tragedy of Amy and Jack's life, the wedge between them and their unbreakable bond. If June is lost to perpetual silence, so too are the other men's daughters: Ray's Susie, long gone to Australia. Lenny's shunned Sally, who once loved, and was loved by, Vince Dodds; and Vince's own Kath, traded for a car sale to one of Vince's clients.

As in *As I Lay Dying* the funeral trip teases to the surface the rolling resentments and agonies of years; but Swift, in *Last Orders* allows for reconciliation, and even for hope. And while Faulkner's talent was to write himself into each of his characters, to insert improbable, magnificent passages of articulation into the minds of his creations, Swift has chosen to efface his writerliness almost entirely from this book: there is a deceptive simplicity in the novel's diction, a captivating authenticity in the voices it projects. This difference may bespeak the distance between the daring of genius and the control of excellence, between the work and the reworking; but readers should be in no doubt that *Last Orders* is an extremely fine novel, a surpassing testament to Swift's vibrant and powerful gifts.

Michael Smith's work in introducing and annotating the poems is an admirable bit of advocacy. He quotes Lorca on the poet: "Nothing can be more misguided than to read his madrigal to a rose with a rose in one's hand. Either the rose or the madrigal should be sufficient", to convey the abstractness and autonomy of Gongora's writing.

His translations of the poems — mainly sonnets — are rhymeless and unscanned, but they preserve the taut grace of the original, like these lines on an epitaph: "but they are honoured by immortal verse/ that shall persist in lettered tomb, / Felisomena, the hard stone, / Daliso the sculptor, their ill the chisel." One would "buy" Gongora just for those two last lines. The American poet Robert Lowell translated two of Gongora's poems in the mid 1960s, and they show what an impact he might have — has had — on English poetry: "The hours will hardly pardon us their loss, / those brilliant hours that were away our days, / our days that ate into eternity."

The final lament, a five-page dream poem, perhaps suggests why Heaney took this on: there are echoes of the elegies in *Field Work*, of the Dante translations, of *Station Island*.

The Spanish poet Luis de Gongora (1561-1627, a generation after Kochanowski) is the only poet I can think of whose name has spawned a noun. Gongorism, according to the dictionary, is "a literary style characterised by studied obscurity and the use of various ornate devices". And yet Gongora comes across as a poet of glittering images and tremendous rhetorical imagination.

The final lament, a five-page dream poem, perhaps suggests why Heaney took this on: there are echoes of the elegies in *Field Work*, of the Dante translations, of *Station Island*.

Michael Hofmann

LAMENTS
By Jan Kochanowski
Faber, £12.99 and £6.99
SELECTED SHORTER POEMS
By Luis de Gongora
Anvil, £8.95

Wan elegy, vital imagery

either in the century of Ronsieu or Mill or, most likely, Freud. Kochanowski's real tenderness towards what is in essence an effigy is an awkward proposition: he simply doesn't have the words and perceptions that would describe a child credibly to us.

And the status of the text in the original language is unclear. Baranczak assures us that the poet practically invented Polish as a literary language, when many writers were equally proficient in Latin. But even a translation by an English contemporary of Kochanowski's like Sidney or Ben Jonson (the author of *On My First Daughter* and *On My Son*, poems to his dead children) would not have matched the primary thrill of the Polish. The couplets of Heaney and Baranczak appear faithful enough (the Polish is printed *en face*, a bold and proud touch), but 600 years after Chaucer, 400 after Marlowe, they do have a certain routine to them.

Kochanowski shows some of that stiffness too, as he mourns his daughter as his "poet-heiress", a well-named girl who said her prayers, was good to the servants and curtsied nicely. It makes you realise that childhood was only invented much later.

The State We're In
OUT NOW IN VINTAGE PAPERBACK
WILL HUTTON

Rachel Cusk on a strike at Martin Amis's domain

Feeding time at the English zoo

English *Settlement* wants to be a big book; a very big book. The biggest book, as Martin Amis might say: so this is Amis' world we are dropping in on, an abbreviated tour of the eschatological highlights of post-modern urban life: a morning in the museum of decaying culture, into the rotting heart of the class system for lunch, and then out in time to watch our guide lift with the toe of his elegant boot the rock that England squirms under and let it come thudding down again.

Set in a penumbra, ubiquitously littered 1990s London, the novel purports to be the narrative of Scott Marshall, an American management consultant employed by a rapacious City firm, whose apparently limitless appetite for sweeping social discourse propels us through an unflagging and profoundly unpleasant autopsy of the country in which he finds himself.

It is to D.J. Taylor's credit that he doesn't even attempt to render the idiom of his narrator, opting instead for lofty, cut-glass prose, occasionally permitting the odd Americanism to bunt down in the novel's exquisitely furnished vocabulary; but it does mean that the novel is awash with unattributed intelligence, rogue perceptions, and a central character so indistinct that he is driven to telling us what everybody else says about him, just so that we know.

According to one of these assessments, Scott is a "concocted little prick"; but this comes as something of a surprise — and comes, too, at the novel's end — transforms the flight into a gesture of disavowal, an authorial disclaimer designed to retract at the last minute what a few pages earlier looked like becoming a grandiloquent *jacuuse*.

Scott's story is the old fashioned kind, in which strands of mystery are amply paid out, to be frantically plaited into resolution for a final *coup de théâtre*. Rumbles are heard of a murderous management buy-out at the firm; an enigmatic new girlfriend is on the scene, the frequent comparison of whose legs to a pair of scissors whets the appetite for some emasculatory high-jinks later on. Scott has been assigned to the accounts of Barry Mower, king of a pornography empire and now proprietor of an ailing Waltham football club; and from over the Atlantic,

ENGLISH SETTLEMENT
By D.J. Taylor
Chapman & Windus, £15.99

Scott's absentee Anglophile father is sending cryptic messages and threatening to visit.

Taylor's grasp of life in the City is sure: the accountant's argot, the theistic greed, the computer-game annihilation by which the besuited become the vagrant, gathering their possessions into black bin-liners. Despite some



Taylor: artful but contrived

interminable detours the fulfilment of the jacket's promise of an "insider's view of how the City works", no doubt down the long and featureless corridors of corporate history, the brute smell of a cruel and deeply masculine world wafts through: a world of the antipathetic but proximate instincts of group behaviour and self-preservation.

Faintly implausibly, Scott's profession affords him access to the upper echelons of English society, where he beds a variety of Home Counties lovelies; encounters whose Laura Ashley leitmotif is deployed somewhat beyond endurance to entrap a world which remains disdainfully out of reach. The aristocracy, that teichy and slumbering beast, swais at Taylor with its tail; but in this lightning tour of our national zoo, we're onto the next exhibit soon enough. A clunking gear change from high life to low brings us to Barry Mower, the porn mogul

with a heart of gold plate whose taste for the unsophisticated ushers in that other English staple, football. Mower is a fine comic character, but chapters devoted to the subject of "How Barry does it" make excessive demands on our interest in him.

But as with so much else in this curious novel, Mower and the world he occupies are described rather than captured, with a kind of anthropological zeal which holds empathy at bay. Taylor keeps the novel running like a documentarist's camera, while his characters meander fruitlessly through their recollections of times better, more interesting, than these. "Incredible, really," muses Barry, "as if I mean, ECC development down in the East End. Old bomb sites down in Poplar and Shoreditch where the council was putting up flats and that... fit a block of flats with duff circuits, say, and fix a maintenance deal with the council. It's always bugged, and they're always having to call you in, but if there's any trouble, well, you just blame your suppliers."

Born along on this tide of *fin de siècle* weariness, the novel looks set to subside into somnolence, despite the occasionally buoyant piece of personal clutter which floats to the surface. Scott's fear of choking — he once nearly died, of combined embarrassment and suffocation, when a piece of seafood lodged in his throat during a high-octane Manhattan business lunch — is a touching sign of life in an otherwise bloodless landscape, and his telephone conversations with his dreadful brother in Montana possess an animus lacking elsewhere.

All, however, founders on a rocky subplot concerning a female serial killer who cuts off men's genitalia and daubs the letters RAM (Revenge Against Men, stupid) on their bedroom walls; a cheap frill stitched with such inanely winking irony to the hem of the plot that when abruptly it falls off two thirds of the way through one hardly notices.

Even a ponderous citation from Anthony Powell ("I began to brood on the complexity of writing a novel about English life") cannot give weight to an occasionally dazzling, but more often artful, contrivance. *English Settlement* sets out to take the big picture; but all we end up with is somebody else's photographs.

Delicate threads spun to the past

Derwent May

HOW MANY YEARS
A Memoir
By Marguerite Yourcenar
Translated by Maria Louise Ascher
Aidan Ellis, £30

French Flanders, just on the Belgian border. She draws a sharp portrait of her bullying grandmother Noëmi, and a

rather less sharp one of her grandfather Michel-Charles. In her unfashionably literary way, she evokes his life as a fashionable young man in Paris by describing the dangerous young women in Balzac that he would not have met.

Her picture of her father Michel is the best and the most intimate — his escape from home to enlist in the army, his desertion from the army to live in England, his desultory life of marriage and



Yourcenar: a dreamlike telling of her family's history

amours. But even this part of the book is, like the rest, written in the historic present tense — as if all is happening under our eyes, and yet all is just a fiction or a dream.

The whole story has a strange feeling of remoteness, and one that is fortified by the author's fatalism and irony. She looks at photographs of her father as a child and as an old man, and comments that "the entire interval between them seems a vain confusion, an agitation with no point, a useless chaos that makes one wonder why it was necessary to pass through it at all." Her tale is like a delicate, ancient spider's web that could crumble at a touch — and one that she would be quite content to see crumble.

SATURDAY BOOKS

The trials of an editor bringing a book to birth: Tunku Varadarajan on a Vietnamese novel *Without a Name*: Christina Odone's first novel: plus paperbacks and more

THE NEW AND REVISED EDITION

Five go out to fulfil great expectations



David Hands, rugby union correspondent, profiles players with the potential to turn their national teams' hopes into championship glory over the next two months

Lawrence Dallaglio

THE maturing of Lawrence Dallaglio has been one of the more impressive aspects of England's recent progress. There was a time when it seemed a bright young talent might be lured too frequently to the sevens circuit, but the events of this season have provided an appropriate finishing school.

The pedigree was there — England schools, colts, under-21, students and A XV — and so was the physique. The doubt was the application. At 20, though, many a young player's head would have been turned by the invitations which flooded towards the England team that won the inaugural world sevens tournament in Edinburgh in 1993. It took some time for England to trust him with an A-team place, partly because they were uncertain about his best position. Dallaglio's capacity to play across the entire back row made him an ideal replacement, though his raw skills were sufficient to impress Jack Rowell, then the incoming manager, who took him with the senior side to South Africa in 1994.

But, with hindsight, the making of Dallaglio may prove to be the disruptions at Wasp caused by the autumnal departure of Rob Andrew and Dean Ryan. The club made him captain at the age of 23. "I drew strength from that and I knew that, if I were to fulfil my hopes of international rugby, I would have to play very well every week," Dallaglio, a final-year student at Kingston University, said.

He gained a place on the bench against South Africa in November — when he won his first cap after injury to Tim Rodber — and was retained for the meeting with Western Samoa last month. He needs time to learn the different lines of the open-side flanker but the three-year wrangle as to the best occupant of the No 7 jersey could well be over.



Dallaglio's sevens technique is proving a valuable asset

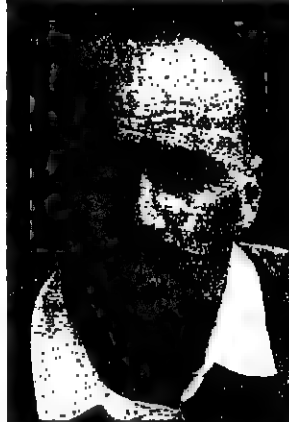


Kurt McQuilkin

THE New Zealand thread which now runs through Irish rugby takes its physical manifestation on the pitch from the national side's newest centre, Kurt McQuilkin. Not that McQuilkin achieved All Black status before beginning his three-year residential qualification for Ireland, but his understanding of the requirements of the new coach, Murray Kidd, will be vital to Ireland's wellbeing.

McQuilkin was born not far from Kildare in King County, New Zealand. He enjoyed a provincial career with North Auckland and King Country before joining Beccles Rangers, the Dublin club coached by his father, Noel; he became eligible for Ireland last November and, even at the comparatively advanced age of 29, was rushed in to the side.

His play for Leinster this season clearly demonstrates why. Not only does he have the speed off the mark and the strength to take his team over the advantage line, he performs automatically all the humdrum chores which are second nature to New Zealanders — the obvious defensive duties, the less obvious



McQuilkin: working hard

covering of the weaknesses of others, the acceptance of responsibility.

One piece of work for the province against Pontypridd was outstanding. Off balance as the Welsh club attacked, he had the wit both to cover a cross kick when his full back had been submerged and to hook away the clearance, almost over his shoulder. The debut cap against the United States earlier this month was almost a matter of course.

He plays in the position that Kidd himself occupied as a player. Since John Mitchell, the former Walkers No 8, is assisting Kidd this season, it makes sense to follow the train of thought through to the



Califano has quickly become a formidable addition to the French armoury

playing side if possible and, in McQuilkin, who works as a development officer for the Irish Rugby Football Union, they have the perfect vehicle. He will bring a sense of stability to the midfield which has been absent too long.

Ireland have an attacking back three in Staples, Geoghegan and Wallace which they must use to advantage but they cannot do so without precision timing from the stand-off and inside centre. McQuilkin is also strong enough to hold up the ball until his back row arrives to build the next wave of attacks; if he can do the hard work, he will be content for the speed of others to carry them to glory.



Bryan Redpath

FOUND for pound, there will be few smaller players in this season's championship than Bryan Redpath, the Melrose scrum half. At a shade over 5ft 6in and 11 stone, he represents one of rugby union's enduring triumphs, that of the smaller man in the land of giants.

More than that, though, Redpath, 25, has quickly emerged from the shadows to become one of the vital cogs in the Scottish engine. Like Graeme Bachop for New Zealand, his swift hands and instant decision-making buy time and space for his colleagues, while his physique puts a premium on skill.

Like so many players these days, his grounding in the game includes a summer in New Zealand, where he learnt that the scrum half's repertoire should include a sound defence. Redpath has a well-deserved reputation for tackling, which helped him initially towards A caps and a tour to the South Pacific in 1993 before his debut international, as a replacement against New Zealand last year.

Two-thirds of his 15 caps came last year. Before that, he had to contest a place with Andy Nicol and Derrick Patterson while overhead lurked the presence of Gary Armstrong. It speaks volumes for his character that he has shrugged off such challenges to emerge as first choice in his own right; the self-employed joiner has become the target of



Redpath has become the target of several English clubs

several clubs south of the Border.

The challenge for Redpath now is to forge an alliance with Gregor Townsend. Hitherto, he has partnered Craig Chalmers, his club stand-off half, but Scotland have opted for the electric Townsend and so Redpath must help him to adjust to the demands of a position which he has occu-

Christian Califano

IF you can hold your own in New Zealand, the chances are that you can distinguish yourself in any company. Christian Califano, then no more than 22, made his first international appearance against the All Blacks in Christchurch in 1994 and shared in France's memorable 2-0 series victory.

His first task was to force his way ahead of vastly more experienced players in Laurent Seigne, Louis Armary and Laurent Bénézech and, full of confidence after being named the best tight-head in France after his displays for Toulouse, he did. His next problem was his opponent, the formidable Richard Loe, who asks the sort of questions — not all of them covered in the law book — that few young props can answer.

Califano's response was so successful that he became an immediate fixture in a France team which has developed a reputation for sound scrummaging. But his game offers far more than that. His ball

handling is utterly secure and his mobility about the field, at 16st 7lb, makes him a formidable addition to the French armoury.

Anyone watching his displays in the Heineken Cup this season, notably in Toulouse's winning final against Cardiff, will bear witness to his prowess (the more remarkable since a rib injury had forced him off the field a week earlier against Swansea) and one of the camcorders of the game with England on Saturday will be his clash with Graham Rowntree, so similarly accomplished.

Employed by Aerospatiale Toulouse, Califano has won 16 caps in just 18 months. His secure technique at the scrum in the cornerstone position is allied to support for his jumpers, which has helped to improve France's lineout so significantly. His three years with Toulouse make him familiar with the all-round game that Jean-Claude Skrela, the France coach and himself a product of Toulouse, seeks to use and his youth ensures a lengthy spell in the team's front row.



Thomas: pace and vision

Justin Thomas

IF there is one position on the field in which a player of vision may profit, it is full back; if there is one quality with which that player needs to be blessed above all, it is pace. In Justin Thomas, Wales have found a happy marriage of both — now all they need to do is release him.

Thomas stands at the head of the new breed of youngsters who have been led in to the national XV over the past two months, symbolising the hope that the dragon's fire can indeed be rekindled. He has thrilled crowds at Llanelli with his poise and fluent counter-attacking skills and, above all, with the confidence of youth in a country whose patience has been sorely tested of late.

Thomas, then 21, made his debut in the daunting surroundings of Ellis Park, Johannesburg, last September, when his slight frame looked unlikely to challenge the rampaging South African forwards. Yet Thomas played his part in a brave defensive display. His catching of the high ball is good but it is in attack that his gifts really come into play.

He has the pace of a wing and the timing of a stand-off half; although he joins his backs in a variety of positions, his great strength is inter-play with his wings, who this season may well turn out to be his club colleagues, Iwan Evans and Wayne Proctor.

But he has the footballer's instinctive knowledge of the moment when best to attack and the place where the enemy is weakest. Since he is unlikely to break defences with the sheer strength upon which so many modern backs depend, his sidestep is an invaluable weapon with which to puncture the first line and his speed can then carry him considerable distances.

Last season, Thomas, a development officer for the Welsh Rugby Union, was named the most promising player in the country. Promise has now to be turned into fulfilment and that will not happen overnight. When it does, it will be exciting to see.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT
This is a hand from a pairs event, shown to me by my old partner Chris Dixon. It illustrates the theme of 'side-suit first'.

Dealer East	Love all	Match point pairs
♠ 4 4 4 ♥ 10 7 5 ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ J 10	♠ 4 4 4 ♥ 10 7 5 ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ J 10	♠ 4 4 4 ♥ 10 7 5 ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ J 10

Contract: Five Clubs by South. Lead: Jack of clubs

At three tables East opened Three Hearts, and when South was playing double for penalties (not greatly used nowadays) the final contract was Three Hearts doubled. The normal play in the heart suit, with no other indications, is to lead towards the king. However, with the likelihood that South has all the hearts East can restrict him to two tricks by starting by leading low towards the ten. That way East makes nine tricks if South doesn't find his diamond ruff.

Some Souths played Five Clubs, and received the best lead of a trump. You might think that with ten trumps between the hands it does no harm to draw a second trump, but if you did that you are guilty of a fundamental mistake, of not counting our tricks. Say you win the second trump in dummy, and belatedly play a diamond. The defence will switch to hearts or

spades, and though after each ruff in dummy you can ruff a diamond in hand, by the time the fifth round is established you have no way back to dummy.

The correct technique is to count your tricks: five trumps in hand, two aces and three ruffs — ten tricks in all. To make eleven you have to establish the diamonds, and the way to do that is to play a diamond at trick two. Then if the defence continue trumps to thwart your cross-ruff plan, you win the trump in dummy. Now you are in the right hand to establish the diamonds — after ruffing a diamond you cash the major suit aces and eventually at the end of the cross-ruff the fifth diamond becomes established and you are in dummy to cash it.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

New league
At Simpson's-in-the-Strand earlier this week the new Martell League for London clubs was launched, with Barry Martin as the organiser. It will be a knockout tournament and first-round pairings include: Roehampton Club v The Saville Club; The RAC v Simpson's; Brooks's Club v Hurlingham; Chelsea Arts Club v RAC B team; East India Club v Hurlingham B team.

The first-round opponent for the BBC team is yet to be announced.

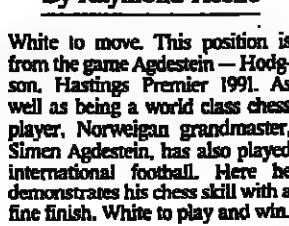
Blazing bishops

The following brilliant game was played in a subsidiary tournament at Hastings this year. Black sacrificed a rook for a minor piece in order to dominate the board with his bishop pair.

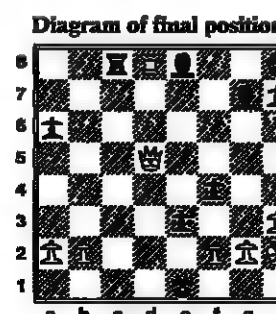
White: Nunn
Black: Cherniav
Hastings Weekend Tournament, January 1996

Sicilian Defence	
1 e4	c5
2 Nf3	Nc6
3 d4	cxd4
4 Nd4	Nf6
5 Ne3	e5
6 Nxb5	d6
7 Bg5	a6
8 Na3	b5
9 Bb3	g6
10 Nd5	f5
11 Bc3	Bc6
12 O-O	Bg7
13 Qh5	f4
14 c4	bxc4

White to move. This position is from the game Agdestein — Hodgson, Hastings Premier 1991. As well as being a world class chess player, Norwegian grandmaster, Simen Agdestein, has also played international football. Here he demonstrates his chess skill with a fine finish. White to play and win.



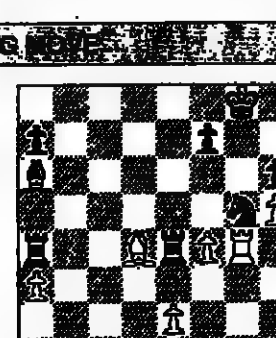
Solution on page 46



Times chess book

Improve your game with Ray Keene's book, *The Times Winning Chess*, published by Batsford at £9.99 (credit card orders may be made to 01376 327901).

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.



England leave Richards in reserve

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

SOMEWHAT to his surprise, Dean Richards will find himself in Paris this weekend, though not in the England team that will open the 1996 five nations' championship against France. The Leicester captain, added to the squad at the weekend, takes his place among the replacements after the withdrawal of Tim Rodber.

On Sunday, there were doubts over Rodber, who was demoted to the bench after the game against Western Samoa, and Ben Clarke, the chosen No 8. Rodber damaged knee and ankle ligaments playing for Northampton, while a scan revealed that Clarke was carrying a groin injury. When England trained in bright sunshine at Roehampton yesterday, however, Clarke declared himself fit.

There may be repercussions after training but Ben and the doctors are confident he will be fit. Jack Rowell, the team manager, said: "The rest and some treatment have done him good."

It is no criticism of Clarke to suggest that Richards, 32, would be a valuable asset at the Parc des Princes, given the

rudderless displays against South Africa and Western Samoa. After the defeat by New Zealand in the World Cup semi-final, there seemed to be no international future for Richards but he remains one of the commanding figures in the domestic game.

In training last Sunday, the work of the forwards lacked focus and even Rowell admitted that the qualities required against the French in Paris — where England last lost in 1988 — were the traditional

English ones of fortitude and discipline, which Richards embodies.

"A lot of rugby is about doing the basics well, about being efficient for 80 minutes, and that's what England should be good at," Rowell said. "If we do the basics right we have a clear chance of victory but we need to fence the French in France this year look to have a well-balanced team. They have the framework in place and all they are doing is in-filling, rather than

replacing the spine of the team, which is what we are having to do."

England have prepared a video which concentrates on the two new centres, Thomas Castaignede and Richard Dourthe, who made so strong an impression during the autumn series against New Zealand. Rowell admires France's ability to introduce two 20-year-olds to international rugby, though he will look to the established pair of Will Carling and Jeremy Guscott to close them down.

"If we are underdogs for this game, we have not talked that way ourselves," Rowell said. "This will be a tough game, tough for France too. They have players new to the championship; they may take time to adjust."

Not if Jean-Claude Skrela, the France coach, can help it. Skrela hopes his side can prove that victory in the third-place play-off match in the World Cup in Pretoria was no fluke. "Toulouse showed [in the Heineken Cup final] you can impose your own game by playing total rugby," Skrela said. "It's up to us to follow their example."

Lomu on wanted list

OVERSEAS players of the calibre of Jonah Lomu and Francois Pienaar have been approached to take part in the game at Twickenham on April 21 that will inaugurate the celebration of 125 years of the Rugby Football Union (David Hands writes).

Leicester, the 1995 league champions, will play an RFU President's XV designed to include two players from each of the leading rugby-playing countries, and certainly two from Japan, as Sanyo Electric will sponsor the match.

"We expect to receive £100,000 from the game, though a lot depends on the crowd," Peter Wheeler, the Leicester chief executive, said yesterday. He is hoping for a crowd of 25,000, although if the guest XV includes players such as Philippe Sella and Michael Lynagh, who have also been approached, it may be larger.

The bigger the crowd, the more the leading clubs will benefit as Leicester intend to share some of the profits throughout the first division.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

- POGUE**
a. A scoundrel, bouncer
b. A bag, purse, wallet
c. A comfortable shoe
- RAKSHI**
a. A Tibetan liquor
b. A Japanese tea-bowl
c. A malignant demon
- PONTIANAK**
a. A Cumbrian motor-car
b. A type of vampire
c. An Italian draw-bridge
- OLINGO**
a. A small nocturnal mammal
b. Sicilian slang
c. A chat-up line

Answers on page 46

Skiing on a collision course with sanity



Downhill ski racers are a rare breed. They are an elite, the darlings, the super-fit, the reckless. The downhillers are the finest, the maddest, the bravest.

Today they are the saddest, too. For on Tuesday, one of Britain's brightest downhill hopes for the next Winter Olympics died after crashing. Kirsten McGibbon, just 20, was enjoying her first year as a member of the Great Britain alpine ski team. She lost control, and her life, on a training run for the Lowlander championships in Altenmarkt-Zell am See, 30 miles south of Salzburg.

She was the British champion in this, the Blue Riband of skiing disciplines, but the grim reality of downhill racing is that one small mistake can end a career, or even snatch away a life. Whenever this happens in sport, it raises inevitable questions about safety.

For downhill racing is the Formula One of winter sport, with high-speed crashes a feature of almost every contest. At times, almost everything is sacrificed to the god of speed, a sacrifice that agonises some within the sport. Bernhard Russi, a former world and Olympic downhill champion, tells of the problems he has had as a course designer for the International Ski Federation. "My greatest task," he said, "is to fight to cut down the average speed of races. The people he has to fight are the skiers and their coaches."

Ronald Duncan, a former British downhill champion, gives a vivid glimpse into the mind of the downhill skier. "You can tell the very first time if it's for you or not," he said. "You get to the bottom in a strange state — you're both terrified and exhilarated at once. The ones who are just a little bit more exhilarated than terrified are the downhill skiers. They're the ones who go back up." One who chose not to go back up is Alberto Tomba, the Italian who has just missed out on a fourth successive World Cup slalom win. He has refused to race the downhill since 1987 because it gives his mother too much worry and heartache.

Competitive skiing has moved a



Tomba, a slalom expert, refuses to compete in downhill races because of fears about their safety

long way from the early days when it took the English to think up something as unlikely as climbing a mountain simply to slide down again with feet strapped precariously to strips of wood. The first Alpine ski races were devised by the British, and no one played a greater part in promoting this new event than Sir Arnold Lunn, who dreamt up the first downhill race in 1911, at Montana, Switzerland. In those days the skiers raced side by side, down wide courses, with the first past the flag the winner. The first safety measure was the abolition of mass-start races

in favour of timing each contestant, starting at one-minute intervals.

From the early days of wooden skis and leather boots, there has been fierce rivalry among manufacturers to produce better equipment for the racer. As the equipment improved, the skiers got faster — and the risks have risen. Like tennis and motor racing, the sport has run into problems created by its own advancing technology. In tennis, the disappearance of the traditional wooden racket has created serving monsters, such as Michael Stich and Goran Ivanisevic, and dull matches. In

Formula One, they have had to put a brake on technology as cornering speeds reached increasing levels of terror.

In skiing, the skis, the waxes, even the clothing are fiercely researched and tested — hi-tech leotards and helmets are refined these days in wind-tunnels before they are let loose on the downhill. The teams who are responsible for course safety struggle to keep up. They are constantly improving the safety netting, and foam padding has replaced the traditional straw bales, but there are many who believe that just lining

the course to catch out-of-control skiers is no real answer.

Downhill men can reach 90mph or more these days, and women regularly attain speeds illegal on British motorways. At these speeds, women run into physiological problems — they don't have the same muscle strength and bulk in their legs and so get tired more quickly. Unable to hold the racing tuck as long as the men, they face danger earlier.

Today's racers all too often reflect the fashion for artificial and over-groomed downhill course settings, where everything is sacrificed to speed and all the bumps and jumps are shaved and flattened in the name of safety. These racers are gliding machines on skis: weight and size is an advantage and their legs are developed like tree-trunks to give them strength to hold the tuck. The champions of previous generations were less muscularly developed but more able to deal with the rolls and bumps of less-manicured courses that demanded balance and agility just as much as courage.

In those days, of course, the bumps meant that plenty of the top skiers fell over. These days, the trend is to sanitise the piste of almost all irregularities, with the result that the courses are faster because, in some respects, they are easier to ski. But when the skiers do crash, they inevitably crash faster. From the spectator's point of view, much of the drama of downhill has been lost.

There are those who fear that in the 65 years since Lunn started it all, downhill ski racing has become over-groomed, too technical, over-specialised and boring. Lunn himself came to despise what he saw as the artificiality of much modern skiing. "The decline of mountain skiing," he wrote, "is closely associated with the development of piste racing."

Lunn, "The Father of Skiing," had his own ideas on what made real alpine skiing. His seventieth birthday treat was to be flown by helicopter to the summit of Mont Blanc so that he could ski down.

You might think they do not make them like that any more, but in May of this year, a man called Davor Karnicar, who styles himself as Slovenia's leading extreme skier, plans to lead a small team without oxygen to the top of Everest. They will carry lightweight skis on their backs, and when they get there they will ski back down to the Tibetan border via the north face of the mountain. Now that's what you call downhill.

JOHN BRYANT

The musical log-book

The Road to Toledo, Radio 3, 3.00pm.

Few musical odysseys can have been as thoroughly authenticated as this one. In 1501 Philip, Archduke of Burgundy, his wife Joanna and a full complement of musicians, journeyed 1,000 miles on horseback from Brussels to Toledo. The progress took two years. It was made to cement Philip's claim to the Spanish succession, his wife being the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. Philip's keeper of journals, Antoine de Lalain, chronicled the journey. The music played en route has been preserved in a manuscript volume called *The Segovia Codex: The Road to Toledo* expertly details extracts from Lalain's chronicles and instrumental and vocal items performed by the Sirinu quartet.

Moonbeam and Mrs Pat, Radio 4, 2.00pm.

I expect the fact that the title of Peter Ling's play gives a Pekinese precedence over that formidable actress, Mrs Patrick Campbell, will be welcomed with cries of "quite right too!" from dog lovers. But, to be honest, Moonbeam has very little to say or do except emit squeaky little barks whenever the conversation gets round to him. Mrs Campbell adored her pet who was faithful to her unto death (hers, not his). Although his role is minimal, he does inspire one of Ling's wittier lines at the end of the play. Imelda Staunton plays Mrs Pat. Vocal ageing on radio is not easy, but with Staunton, I could almost hear the wrinkles proliferating.

Peter Daville

RADIO 1

6.00am Chris Warren 6.30 Chris Evans 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Lisa Farnson, incl at 12.30-12.45pm Newsbeat and at 1.15 The Net 2.00 Nelly Campbell 4.00 Mark Goodier, 5.30-6.45 Newsbeat, 6.15 The Net 7.00 Evening Session, 7.30-8.00 Collins and Macdonald's 8.15-9.00 Mark Goodier, 9.00-10.00 Mark Goodier, 10.00-11.00 Mark Goodier, 11.30-12.00 Mark Goodier, 12.00-12.30 Mark Goodier, 12.30-1.00 Mark Goodier, 1.00-1.30 Mark Goodier, 1.30-2.00 Mark Goodier, 2.00-2.30 Mark Goodier, 2.30-3.00 Mark Goodier, 3.00-3.30 Mark Goodier, 3.30-4.00 Mark Goodier, 4.00-4.30 Mark Goodier, 4.30-5.00 Mark Goodier, 5.00-5.30 Mark Goodier, 5.30-6.00 Mark Goodier, 6.00-6.30 Mark Goodier, 6.30-7.00 Mark Goodier, 7.00-7.30 Mark Goodier, 7.30-8.00 Mark Goodier, 8.00-8.30 Mark Goodier, 8.30-9.00 Mark Goodier, 9.00-9.30 Mark Goodier, 9.30-10.00 Mark Goodier, 10.00-10.30 Mark Goodier, 10.30-11.00 Mark Goodier, 11.00-11.30 Mark Goodier, 11.30-12.00 Mark Goodier, 12.00-12.30 Mark Goodier, 12.30-1.00 Mark Goodier, 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he musical
log-book

Mind your body language in Hollywood

First there was *Hollywood Women*. Then there was *Hollywood Kids*. Now we have *Hollywood Pets*. Spot on, apparently — TV does indeed plan to bring us *Hollywood Pets* later this year. Now there's a date for your diary.

Call me a cynic but as I settled back for yet another dose of high speed, three-second-out television, the word "formula" sprang mysteriously to mind. Nothing as complex as our old friend *Fernat* you understand. No, the truly marvellous proof unearthed by David Green and his team at September Films is this: Hollywood nips just about any collective noun equals showtime, folks, and TV will buy as much as he can make.

The question is, are we happy to watch as much as he can make? Despite my best high-minded intentions, the answer for the first

two-thirds of last night's opening instalment (improbably there are three more to come) is yes. What happened in the final third? We'll get to that later — you might still be eating your breakfast.

The format was utterly predictable (lots of Hollywood hunks talking about their favourite subjects — themselves) and so was the content of an episode called *Vanity and Vulgarly*. For while tinsel town's women worry about the two T's (tits and teeth, darling), its menfolk obsess over the two P's — pees and pates. Actually, there was a third P... but no, I still don't think we're quite ready for it.

What rescued the formula was the humour. Most of the subjects knew they were likely to be gently sent up and if they didn't — well, Stephanie Beacham and Roseanne Barr were around to do a more brutal job.

And very good fun it all was, with the familiar and famous

being mixed in with a likeable bunch of unknown wannabes, variously captioned as actor/stripes, actor/film driver, and even, actor/world kick boxing champion. Collectively they talked us through their high maintenance lifestyle — the visits to the gym, the dentist (if you're worried about bad breath, check out the Halimovics) and the hairdresser. That, of course, is assuming you still have your own hair.

Unless you are Bruce Willis, being bald in Hollywood can seriously damage your wealth — toupees, wigs, weaves and implants, we saw them all. But, as Roseanne observed, there is a curious hierarchy to this hairy artifice. The more powerful you are, the worse your wig can be. She had the pictures to prove it.

But as we moved on to plastic surgery (and learnt that one of the side-effects of male face-lifts is

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

having to shave behind your ears) I had a nasty feeling I knew where we were heading. Sure enough, part three was entirely devoted to the third P: the penis. Now, penis augmentation is a subject that has been extensively covered on Channel 4's late night shock shows — and the later the better as far as I am concerned. It is a seriously horrid operation, with a yuk factor approaching infinity.

Far less forgivable, however, was the change of pace that accompanied the shift south. Suddenly the film slowed to a crawl, as an assortment of sad chaps held forth at disproportionate length about the unproven rights and painful wrongs of a particular surgeon's technique. The humour had gone, the energy had gone and shortly afterwards, so had I.

Alternative therapies were on offer as Under the Sun (BBC2) continued its stimulating run with *The Witching Tree*. Problems with polygamy? Then Mpapane is your man.

Mpapane is an *inyanga*, a South African witch doctor — part healer, part herbalist, part agony aunt — and the film revealed an unexpected line of common sense running through the rituals that surround his work.

Faced with a man who was having trouble with two wives ("they keep fighting but I love them

both equally"), Mpapane consulted the bones, only to announce: "You must go home and settle the matter yourselves."

Understandably overwhelmed, the patient sprang his own surprise: "I don't have any money — not even for this session." Mpapane looked an unhappy *inyanga*, although he did cheer up later, when 170 workers from a sawmill turned up for help in tiling disputes at work. Pragmatically, he identified the foreman as witches, the penalty for which was to be stripped, fined and covered in oil. That counted as getting off lightly, the film's rather unconvincing narration revealed that more than 100 people were burnt to death as witches last year.

This film, too, had a pretty high yuk factor, with a number of cures involving sharp encounters with rusty looking razor blades. But these were as

nothing compared to the help meted out to an elderly gentleman looking to put an end to a run of bad luck that included a beheading attempt. He had a scapegoat (the original bleeding variety) sacrificed right on top of him. Lots more chanting and lots more common sense from the man with the knife. "Kneel over there, so you don't get blood on your underpants."

For the first 20 minutes or so, there seemed to have been a big improvement in *Video Nation* (BBC2), the camcorder volunteers for which now range from Lord Montagu of Beaulieu to a homeless beggar. But as we progressed through their collective view of the alphabet of modern communities (A is for apathy, B for being there, C for clear, D for don't go to sleep, as the title had suggested, at N is for Neighbours, long have we finally got there, I knew exactly what Z stood for: zzzzz...

- BBC1**
- 8.00am Breakfast (50050)
- 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (Coastal) (2906125)
- 9.10 Kilroy, Studio discussion (1) (2942789)
- 10.00 News (Coastal), regional news and weather (8794675) 10.05 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (5400012)
- 10.30 Good Morning with Anne and Nick (s) (48147)
- 12.00 News (Coastal), regional news and weather (8225577) 12.30pm Pebble Mill with Ross King (s) (8456963) 12.50 Regional News and weather (13166418)
- 1.00 News (Coastal) and weather (81708)
- 1.30 Neighbours (Coastal) (s) (8422044)
- 1.50 The Flying Doctors, Australian medical drama, (Coastal) (s) (835418)
- 2.30 This Is Your Life (s), (Coastal) (s) (4474321) 3.05 Timespeakers, Quiz (s) (5630873)
- 3.30 The New York Bear Show (s) (7512268)
- 3.35 The Muppet Place (s) (2928760)
- 3.50 Peter Pan and the Pirates (s), (Coastal) (s) (804708) 4.10 Highlander, (Coastal) (s) (1213031) 4.35 The Really Wild Show, (Coastal) (s) (6944673)
- 5.00 Newsround, (Coastal) (4319855) 5.10 The Demon Headmaster, The final episode, (Coastal) (s) (750058)
- 5.35 Neighbours (s), (Coastal) (s) (201876)
- 6.00 Six O'Clock News with Anna Ford and Jennie Bond, (Coastal) Weather (401)
- 6.30 Regional News Magazine (383)
- 7.00 Top of the Pops, (Coastal) (s) (7499)
- 7.30 EastEnders, (Coastal) (s) (805)
- 8.00 The Vet: A Bit of a Chance, Drama series about a Devon veterinary practice, (Coastal) (s) (537321)
- 8.50 Animal Hospital Heroes, Rolf Harris remembers some heartwarming stories from previous visits to the vets and pets of the Hampshire Hospital in London, (Coastal) (s) (509444)
- 9.00 Nine O'Clock News with Michael Barker, (Coastal) Regional news and weather (902)
- 9.30 French and Saunders, Dawn and Jennifer with another collection of comedy sketches, Tonight they pay irreverent homage to the Italian film director Federico Fellini, With guest appearances by Kate Winslet and Elizabeth Mitchell, (Coastal) (s) (69262)
- 10.00 Inside Story: A Band is Born, (Coastal) (s) (697079)
- WALE: 10.00 The State (5147) 10.30 Inside Story (843321) 11.30 Question Time (167673) 12.20am-1.00am Man on Fire (218787)
- 10.00 Question Time with David Dimbleby from Bristol, The panel includes Joan Ruckwood, MP, Max Hastings and Elizabeth Mitchell, (Coastal) (s) (69262)
- 11.50 Film: Man on Fire (1987) starring Steven Seagal, A drama about a former CIA operative who takes on the job of bodyguard to a wealthy Italian couple and their 12-year-old child. When the kid is kidnapped he must use all his training to rescue the youngster. With Jackie Malle, Joe Pesci, Brooke Adams and Jonathan Pryce. Directed by John Badham. (s) (251741) 1.20am Weather (8222221)

- BBC2**
- 5.00am Business and World, A new dawn in Rawterstall (72760) 5.30 No More Casualties (51892)
- 7.00 Breakfast News, (Coastal) (6279863)
- 7.15 Lassie (3393741) 7.40 Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (s) (7457296) 8.05 Blue Peter (s), (Coastal) (s) (5400012)
- 8.35 The Record (9891147) 9.00 For the Love of It (s) (8541857)
- 9.05 Seeing Through Science (4264012) 9.30 Leningrad (333844) 9.45 Over the Moon (333429) 10.00 Heyday (6188147) 10.25 Storyline (7339301) 10.45 The Experimenter (4394708) 11.05 Space Ark (8400215) 11.15 Health 3 (1378514) 11.35 Landmarks (2804234) 12.00 Pathways of Belief (3100503) 12.15pm Children (4526588) 12.30 Working Lunch (77031) 1.00 Lifestyles (3250554) 1.25 Technology (2806553) 1.40 Numberline (9424216)
- 2.00 Tales of the Tooth Fairy (s) (61426708) 2.05 Puppyparty Tales (s) (61427079)
- 2.10 The Andrew Neil Show (s) (5624298)
- 3.00 News (Coastal) and weather: Westminster with Nick Ross, (Coastal) (s) (7347780) 3.55 News (Coastal) and weather (5303333)
- 4.00 Today's the Day, History quiz (s) (298)
- 4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook (s) (708)
- 5.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show, (Coastal) (s) (7985760) 5.40 Still in Business, (s) (381227) 5.55 My Village, Well-dressing in the Derbyshire village of Eym (568692)
- 6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, (Coastal) (s) (696925)
- 6.45 They Were There, French film about Robert cinema signposts (s) (683498)
- 7.00 Waiting for God (s), (Teletext) (s) (6741)
- WALE: 7.00 Pound for Pound
- 7.30 First Sight: Money to Play With, The "nursery" vouches scheme (437)
- WALE: 7.30 Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? EAST: 7.30 Matter of Fact; MIDLANDS: 7.30 Midlands Report; NORTH: 7.30 Close Up North; SOUTH: 7.30 Southern Eye; KIDS on LOAN; WEST, SOUTH-WEST: 7.30 Close Up



Spies and fall of John Spiers (8.00pm)

- 8.00 My Brilliant Career: John Spiers — The Patients' Champion (Coastal) (s) (4789)
- 8.30 Jeremy Clarkson's Motorworld, Switzerland, (Coastal) (s) (3290)
- 8.00 Traces of Guilt: The Last Defence, (Coastal) (s) (703383)
- 8.50 Pottery Histories (Coastal) (s) (345031)
- 10.00 Game On (s), (Coastal) (5778)
- 10.30 Newsnight with Kathy Wark (375505)
- 11.15 Late Review (s) (24978)
- 11.55 Weather (155708)
- 12.00 The Midnight Hour (38345)
- 12.30am-6.00 The Learning Zone

- CHOICE**
- Inside Story: A Band is Born BBC1, 8.00pm
- If Take That can sell eight million records and videos in a ridiculously short time, why not Christopher, Giles, Jamie and Richard who are, respectively, a fast food waiter, a school-leaver and unemployed? This young and handsome quartet have been chosen from more than 7,000 hopefuls to be the rock world's new boy band. Luckily and unexpectedly, they can sing as well as look good but whether their voices, singly or collectively, will be what the public wants is another matter. There is also the not inconsiderable matter of finding a potential hit song. The film offers a searching progress report on the four, eventually called Upside Down, from initial wrangles about contracts to their first public performance during a concert in Cardiff. It all comes down to whether the young women in the audience scream loud enough.

- Traces of Guilt: The Last Defence BBC2, 9.00pm**
- The forensic science series turns to one of the trickiest tasks for a defence lawyer, of persuading a jury that a killer was not responsible for his actions. This can be the last chance to turn a murder charge into manslaughter or, in the United States, to commute a death penalty to life imprisonment. Cases from Britain and America illustrate the difficulties. After Roger Degarmo, who shot a young woman in Texas, spent many years on death row, his lawyer secured a retrial by arguing that a head injury suffered long before the crime had changed his mind. A personality disorder was also claimed as mitigation for "Sammy", who suffocated a woman neighbour while trying to rob her house. But because the demands of the law and the findings of science do not necessarily coincide, such defences are never watertight.

- My Brilliant Career BBC2, 8.00pm**
- Another engrossing film in the series with the director's title features John Spiers and his bumpy three years as chairman of Brighton NHS Trust. A brash and successful businessman used to running his own show, Spiers arrived in the job convinced that the medical establishment needed a good shake-up. He pretended to be a wheelchair victim to expose a hospital's uncaring attitude to its patients. The story was picked up by the national press and the consultants were outraged by what they saw as a cheap stunt. From then on it was conflict all the way, until Spiers sealed his fate by describing breast cancer specialists as top-standard meddlers. He says his only concern was for patients, but admits he liked to go too fast. Spiers' aunt and uncle provide a Greek chorus-style commentary on his rise and fall.

- Survival: Cliff Hangers ITV, 7.30pm**
- It is the ideal opening gambit for a wildlife film: show a bare, dry landscape where nothing apparently can live and then reveal that nature is there in surprising variety. This location is the Colorado Plateau, in the United States, where currents of wind and water have carved into spectacular canyons with sheer cliff faces. For 700 years American Indians lived there, until forced out by drought in the 13th century. Now the inhabitants are the desert shrubs, cacti and rattlesnakes, with golden eagles and falcons poised for attack from the air. In telling a story of predators and prey, breeding cycles and arduous ways of staying alive, the film pushes in closer to the human eye can possibly hope to. Andrew Sacks narrates.

- GMTV (7.30-8.00)**
- 8.25 Win, Lose or Draw (s) (4282654)
- 8.55 Regional News (Teletext) (8165206)
- 10.00 The Time...the Place (s) (1936992)
- 10.35 This Morning (Teletext) (67170302)
- 12.20pm Regional News (Teletext) (6214741)
- 12.30 ITN News and weather (Teletext) (6529953)
- 12.35 Shortland Street (8204857)
- 1.20 Coronation Street (s) (Teletext) (32959126)
- 1.50 Home and Away (Teletext) (78083128)
- 2.20 Chain Letters (s) (1838147)
- 2.50 Vanessa (Teletext) (s) (4469873)
- 3.20 ITN News (Teletext) (2117147)
- 3.25 Regional News (Teletext) (2161418)
- 3.30 The Riddlers (2930505) 3.40 Wizards (s) (s) (7521128) 3.50 Rupert (1171645)
- 4.20 Mike and Angelo (s) (7518483)
- 4.45 Reboot It (Teletext) (s) (9839825)
- 5.10 A Country Practice (s) (6085128)
- 5.40 ITN News and weather (727498)
- 6.00 Home and Away (s) (Teletext) (689050)
- 6.25 ITN News (Teletext) (458234)
- 7.00 Emmerdale (5895)



The bobcat stalks its prey (7.30pm)

- 7.30 Survival: Cliff Hangers (Teletext) (s) (953)
- 8.00 The Bill: No Assistance Required, Dettie finds herself the object of unwanted affections from a civic-minded admirer and London's desire to settle an old score arouses the suspicion of Monroe (Teletext) (1215)
- 8.30 Blues and Two: Make Pumps Five, Documentary series about the work of the emergency services. This week's programme looks at firefighters in Greater London (Teletext) (s) (5050)
- 8.00 Taggart: Devil's Advocate, In the first episode another two victims are murdered and Jackie and Reid are fast running out of suspects. Starring James Macpherson (Teletext) (s) (3788)
- 10.00 ITN News at Ten and weather (Teletext) (44215)
- 10.30 HTV West Headlines and Weather (583147)
- 10.40 Film: Knight Moves (1993) starring Christopher Lambert, A chess player tries to unravel cunningly disguised clues from a serial killer who challenges him to a bizarre psychological game. Directed by Carl Schaefer (Teletext) (2009708)
- 12.50 Not Fade Away: Sonia (s) (4238267)
- 1.50 SNR (6176451)
- 2.40 ITV Sport Classics (2040258)
- 3.10 On the Line (17768432)
- 3.30 The Crime Hour (58074)
- 4.30 The Time...the Place (61616)
- 5.00 The New Mr & Mrs Show (46819)
- 5.30 ITN Morning News (51600)

- As HTV WEST except:**
- 6.25pm-7.00 Wales Tonight (458234)
- 7.30-8.00 Swansea Festival (963)
- WESTCOUNTRY**
- As HTV West except:**
- 12.55pm Chain Letters (6503854)
- 1.25 Emmerdale (3296249)
- 1.55-2.25 Home and Away (7808249)
- 2.25 Vanessa (18937418)
- 2.55-3.20 A Country Practice (1689895)
- 3.10-3.40 Home and Away (6085128)
- 6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (88878)

- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except:**
- 12.55pm Home and Away (6503854)
- 1.25 Chain Letters (3296249)
- 1.55 A Country Practice (8422549)
- 2.20 Vanessa (18938147)
- 2.50-3.20 High Road (4485673)
- 3.10-3.40 Shortland Street (6085128)
- 6.25-7.00 Central News (458234)
- 12.50am Live from the Llydrome (8773987)
- 2.45 Shift (7347277)
- 3.35 The Crime Hour (1577797)

- MERIDIAN**
- As HTV West except:**
- 12.55pm-1.25 Chain Letters (6503854)
- 1.25 Home and Away (3296249)
- 2.20 Vanessa (18938147)
- 2.50-3.20 Behind the Scenes with Penelope Keith (4485673)
- 3.10 Home and Away (6085128)
- 6.00 Meridian Tonight (498)
- 6.30-7.00 Gwentways (809)

- SAC**
- Starts: 7.00 The Big Breakfast (74031)
- 9.00 Fifteen to One (54682)
- 9.30 Middle English (332012)
- 9.45 Place and People (369128)
- 9.45 The Way Things Go (1765963)
- 10.05 Scientific Eye (1589321)
- 10.25 Geographical Eye (7331499)
- 10.45 Quast (1954925)
- 11.00 History in Action (4528037)
- 11.20 Rm Ra (8634825)
- 11.40 The German Programme (5351708)
- 12.00 House to House (41128)
- 12.30pm Madeline (79499)
- 1.00 Slot Malthrin (84418)
- 1.30 Film: The Big Trees (3301316)
- 3.10 Scouts Dubs Do (2119505)
- 3.15 Rick Laid: My Mother Hates the People (11945)
- 4.00 Backdate (692)
- 4.30 Traveleg (578)
- 5.00 s Pump Used 5 (3873)
- 5.30 Countdown (128)
- 6.00 Newyddion (12324)
- 6.15 Hemo (167470)
- 7.00 Pobl Y Cwm (954499)
- 7.25 Pwy Di Pwy? (738944)
- 8.00 Y Farch Dws Nesa (9657)
- 8.30 Newyddion (1692)
- 10.00 Wy Mawr (42857)
- 10.30 Film: A Stranger Among Us (54777418)
- 12.25am Dispatches (2104548)

- SHANLEY**
- 6.35am Think Tank (s) (Teletext) (s) (5819825)
- 7.00 The Big Breakfast (74031)
- 9.00 Fifteen to One (s) (Teletext) (s) (54682)
- 9.30 Schools: Middle English (332012) 9.45 Place and People (1765963) 10.05 Scientific Eye (1589321) 10.25 Geographical Eye Over Britain (7331499) 10.45 Quast (1954925) 11.00 History in Action, Hypotheticals (4528037) 11.20 Rm Ra (8634825) 11.40 The German Programme (5351708)
- 12.00 House to House (41128)
- 12.30pm Sesame Street (75741) 1.30 Halleluhallo and Chigley (51470) 2.00 Augusta's Birthday, Animation from Hungary (51413878)
- 2.05 Film: Blossoms in the Dust (1941) starring Greer Garson as a widow who founds a Texas orphanage. Directed by Henry LeRoy, (Teletext) (437418)
- 4.00 Backdate, Time traps, trivia and tests with Valerie Singleton (Teletext) (s) (692)
- 4.30 Countdown, (Teletext) (s) (878)
- 5.00 Rick Laid: I Obed to This Marriage, (Teletext) (s) (7143050)
- 5.45 Terrytoons (134908)
- 6.00 Home Improvement, Comedy with Tim Allen, (Teletext) (s) (741)
- 6.30 New Gamesweek featuring the latest computer games (s) (321)
- 7.00 Channel 4 News (Teletext) (850063)
- 7.50 The Sift, Viewers' soapbox (853418)
- 8.00 The Pulse, Medical magazine presented by Shahnaz Fakhri, (Teletext) (s) (9657)



Hand-rolling cigars in Cuba (8.30pm)

- 8.30 A Taste of the Caribbean, The engagingly chaotic cookery series looks at Cuba, its cuisine and its customs (Teletext) (s) (1892)
- 9.00 The Real X-Files, An Equinox special about how the American intelligence forces have trained and deployed psychics for espionage missions (s) (Teletext) (s) (4031)
- 10.00 Film: Butterbox Babies (1994), Television film based on the true story of Lia and William Young, who founded the ideal Maternity Home in Nova Scotia during the Second World War. Starring Susan Clark, Peter MacNeill and Michael Riley. Directed by Don McBrearty (Teletext) (s) (210215)
- 11.50 Cutting Edge: Sexual Harassment (s) (Teletext) (s) (31392)
- 12.50am Dispatches (s) (Teletext) (297378)
- 1.35 Rebellion of the Hanged, A Spanish drama set in Mexico. English subtitle (s) (222053)
- 3.05 Film: Signal 7 (1984) Improved comedy about failed actors turned San Francisco cabdrivers. With Bill McKibbin and Dan Leary. Directed by Paul Verhoeven (558141). Ends at 4.00

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Vision supplement, published Saturday

SKY ONE

- 7.00am Dated Egg and Soldiers (2075789) 7.01 X-Men (580025) 7.35 Crazy Cow (198321) 7.45 Top Gun (208577) 8.00 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, (s) (1140) 8.30 Press Your Luck (504186) 9.00 Court TV (8470) 9.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (22955) 10.00 Conan O'Brien Live (1185) 10.30 Jerry Springer (20708) 10.50 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 3.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 4.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 5.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 6.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 7.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 8.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 9.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 10.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 11.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 12.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 1.30 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.00 Jeopardy! (24254) 2.30 Jeopardy! (

Cronje and Kallis usher South Africa to victory at Kingsmead and series triumph

Donald adds to England's one-day woes

FROM SIMON WILDE IN DURBAN

DURBAN (South Africa won 105; South Africa beat England by five wickets)

AFTER all the brave talk of fightbacks, England's cricketers went very quietly last night. Outperformed with bat, ball and in the field, they were beaten with ease by South Africa in the fifth one-day international at Kingsmead and, by going 4-1 down, surrendered the seven-match series with two games to play.

It was England's first defeat in a one-day series since they were beaten 3-2 in the Caribbean two years ago. Michael Atherton's first full series as captain. Since then they have beaten New Zealand, South Africa and West Indies, although they failed to qualify for the World Series Cup finals in Australia last year.

South Africa's match-winners were, with the ball, Allan Donald and, with the bat, Hansie Cronje and Jacques Kallis, who broke their country's third-wicket partnership record in one-day internationals with a stand of 118. Kallis played the innings that will, perhaps, be remembered longer, but it was Cronje who broke the shackles imposed by the England seamers after Cork had dismissed Kirsten and Hudson with his first nine balls.

Kallis scored a fine 67, his maiden half-century at international level, and revealed himself to be a player with both an excellent tempera-

ment and a wonderful range of strokes. He is the third player of outstanding promise to emerge for South Africa during England's tour, after two bowlers, Shaun Pollock and Paul Adams.

Kallis is 20, Pollock 22 and Adams 18. By way of contrast, the only players England can claim to have unearthed are Peter Martin, who is 27 and of less obvious pedigree, and Jack Russell, 32, who has re-emerged from the shadows as a one-day player. Yesterday Russell played his third valuable innings of the series, a sprightly 21 from 36 balls that helped pull round an England innings of 184 all out strewn with careless dismissals.



Thorpe: dejected

England finished the game as listlessly as they did the previous one at Centurion Park last Sunday, with Atherton rotating his bowlers in desperate search for a breakthrough while bowling to defensive fields. While this went on, the South Africa batsmen did much as they pleased. Even so, it might have been a different outcome had England fielded as do South Africa, which is to say breathtakingly. They dropped Cronje three times and Kallis once, three of them the sort of sharp chances South Africa take in their sleep — one of which split the webbing on Stewart's left hand and required four stitches — and the fourth an absolute sitter. The culprit was DeFreitas and the recipient Cronje, who was on 29 at the time.

It was a battle fought out among the seamers, although England made a late throw of the dice with Hick's off spin. Having examined the pitch under heavily overcast skies, Atherton took a last-minute decision to leave out Illingworth in favour of DeFreitas.

South Africa recalled de Villiers, who showed no sign of rustiness after his recent injury, and McMillan, despite an announcement earlier in the week that he would not appear again in the series. Cullinan was again incapacitated by his calf strain.

As usual, the real difference between the two bowling sides was the destructive pace of Donald, whose spell of four wickets in 27 balls wrecked the promising start made by Atherton and Stewart, who put on 51 for the first wicket in 15 overs before both fell in Donald's second over. Donald soon added the scalps of Hick and Smith, after which it was always going to be an uphill fight for England.

Not for the first time in this series, Thorpe was left to supervise the later stages of England's innings. He began in typically pugnacious fashion, by pulling Donald for two

fours, and remained the dominant partner in stands of 54 in 14 overs with White and 32 in seven with Russell, but his dismissal for 63, his third century in four innings, started a collapse that showed the tail at its feeblest.

After Thorpe was out in the 44th over, only 20 runs were added and Cork, DeFreitas and Gough, who was out attempting the only shot he seems to know, the nurdled leg glance, all failed to hit out in the way late-order players must in one-day cricket.

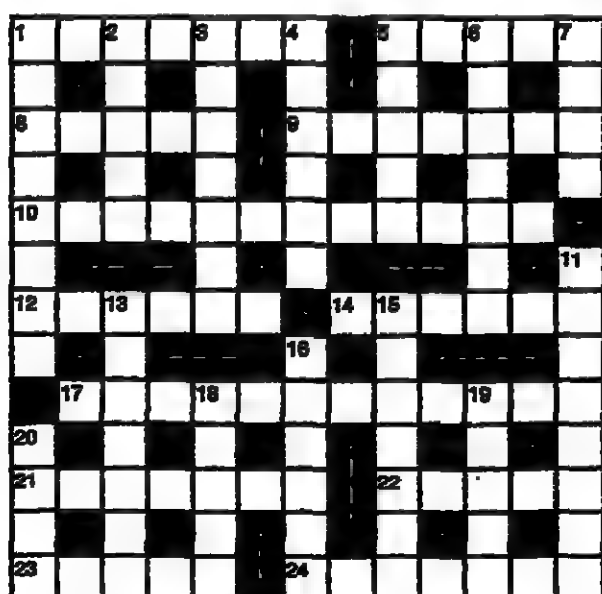
The accuracy of Donald's supporting cast was an object lesson. They rarely strayed from the straight and narrow, so that when England's frustrated batsmen were driven to taking liberties, they often paid the price. Indeed, nine of England's wickets were bowled or caught behind and the tenth — the run-out of Russell — was also down to the accuracy of the bowler. Pollock kicking the ball with his right foot into the stumps.

Draw in Hamilton, page 46



Donald is jubilant after bowling Stewart during the spell that destroyed the England batting yesterday. Photograph: Graham Morris

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 681 in association with
BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS

- 1 Satan; an old match (7)
- 5 Solar System visitor, bright tail (5)
- 8 Biographer of Socrates (5)
- 9 Criminal (5,2)
- 10 Lack of practice (12)
- 12 Be living example (of) (6)
- 14 Sun god; moon mission (6)
- 17 Politician with no local roots (6-6)
- 21 Coming (unpleasantly) close (7)
- 22 Beat edible seeds (5)
- 23 Take a dip (5)
- 24 General pardon (7)

DOWN

- 1 Unevenly balanced (8)
- 2 Ardently desire (5)
- 3 Old mugger (7)
- 4 Prize (6)
- 5 Identical genetic copy (5)
- 6 Amazing, inexplicable (7)
- 7 Offensive vehicle; liquid container (4)
- 11 Abstemious state (8)
- 13 Show (truth of) (4,3)
- 15 Enclosure for baby and toys (7)
- 16 Mark of disgrace (6)
- 18 High self-regard (5)
- 19 Heraldic red (5)
- 20 (Large) solid block (4)

PRIZES

THE WINNER will receive a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on British Midland's domestic or international network.

THE RUNNER-UP will receive a return ticket to anywhere on British Midland's domestic network. British Midland offers an extensive range of departure and destination points throughout the UK as well as Europe. As the UK's second largest scheduled service airline and Heathrow's second biggest user, it operates a fleet of 35 aircraft on over 1200 flights per week throughout the UK and Europe. All flights are subject to availability.

Post your entry to Times Two Crossword, PO Box 6886, London E2 8SP to arrive by next Monday. The winners' names and solution will appear on Wednesday.

Name/Address

SOLUTION TO No 680

ACROSS: 6 Squeeze 7 April 9 Taper 10 Colleen 11 Crystal ball 14 In cold blood 17 Tumbler 19 Abide 21 Duels 22 Flat out
DOWN: 1 Quip 2 Berasal 3 Height 4 Pail 5 Free hand 6 Site 8 Lonely 11 Cumber 12 Look away 13 Gifted 15 Benefit 16 Pest 18 Last 20 Icon

FA happy with fixture balance for World Cup qualifying task

By JOHN GOODBODY

ENGLAND, notoriously ill-at-ease in international fixtures soon after the start of the domestic season, will have to play their first game on September 1 this year when trying to qualify for the 1998 World Cup finals. They will begin their campaign by visiting Moldova for the first time.

The initial home game will be against Poland, at Wembley on October 9, and the last match will be against Italy, in Rome on October 11, 1997.

Terry Venables, who will be handing over as England coach after the European championships in June, and Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, spent four hours at a meeting in Warsaw yesterday reaching agreement with representatives of Italy, Poland, Moldova and Georgia. Only the winners of the group are certain of a place in the finals in France, in which 32 nations will compete.

"Even if you picked out eight perfect solutions, someone could find holes in it because it is so difficult to negotiate the ideal strategy," Venables said.

England will play four of their qualifying games at weekends, which is a change in the usual pattern. "I think it will help the clubs a great deal because they will now get their players back for a week before they have to play again," Venables said.

David Davies, the FA's director of public affairs, said: "Our priority going into these negotiations was to deliver a balanced programme of fixtures, balanced in alternating home and away games, balanced in giving time between fixtures and balanced in build-

ENGLAND

1996
Sat Sep 1: Moldova (a)
Wed Oct 3: Poland (h)
Sat Nov 3: Georgia (a)

1997

Wed Feb 12: Italy (h)
Wed Apr 30: Georgia (h)
Sat May 31: Poland (a)
Wed Sep 10: Moldova (h)
Sat Oct 11: Italy (a)

ing momentum and spreading the games.

"We also wanted to avoid the worst of the weather in our opponents' countries. Some of our rivals had the same priorities and Italy have a similar deal worth £1.5 million.

After signing their second foreign international in a fortnight, however, West Ham will have to wait for the Romania World Cup forward to be given a new British work permit, which could take up to two weeks.

Slaven Bilic, the Croatia centre back who joined West Ham from Karlsruhe for a club record £1.65 million ear-

SCOTLAND

1996
Sat Aug 31: Austria (a)
Sat Oct 5: Latvia (a)
Wed Oct 9: Estonia (a)
Sun Nov 10: Sweden (h)

1997

Sat Mar 28: Estonia (h)
Wed Apr 2: Austria (h)
Wed Apr 30: Sweden (a)
Sun June 2: Belorussia (a)
Sat Sep 6: Belorussia (h)
Sat Oct 11: Latvia (h)

World Cup rivals of old, at Wembley and then complete their autumn campaign with a match in Georgia, another weekend fixture, on November 9.

The FA decided not to play a game in March 1997, after a request from the Premier League, because of the busy Easter programme. Instead Italy will visit Wembley on February 12. The home match with Georgia is on April 30, a

month before the difficult away fixture in Poland.

At the draw in Paris last month, the European countries were split into nine groups for the qualifying tournament. The nine winners and the best runner-up qualify automatically for the finals. The other eight runners-up will be paired for the play-offs with only the winners going through.

Scotland, who are in a six-nation group with Austria, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden and Belorussia, have avoided playing any ties before the European championship finals in England this summer.

Instead, they will start on August 31, in Vienna, where they defeated Austria in a friendly two years ago. The Scots have a tradition of winning their opening match while trying to qualify for the World Cup. They will then play an away double-header, against Latvia on October 5 and against Estonia on October 9.

Scotland's first home game will be against Sweden, the probable group favourites, on November 10. This is the first of three successive home games. Estonia will visit Hampden on March 29, 1997 and Austria on Wednesday, April 2. Both visiting countries will have just come out of winter breaks.

The Scots, who were represented at their fixtures meeting in Vienna yesterday by Craig Brown, the team manager, and Jim Farry, the SFA's chief executive, will visit Stockholm on Wednesday, April 30, followed by a trip to Belorussia on Sunday, June 8. Their final home matches are against Belorussia and Latvia in September and October.

South Africa won 105

ENGLAND

"M A Atherton c Richardson b Donald 17
A J Stewart b Donald 51
R A Smith c Richardson b Donald 8
G A Hick c Richardson b Donald 21
G P Thorpe b Matthews 63
C White b Pollock 16
P A J DeFreitas run out 21
D G Cork b Matthews 1
P A J DeFreitas b Pollock 8
D Gough b de Villiers 1
P J Martin not out 1
Extras (lb 1, lb 4, w 6) 11
Total (48.5 overs) 184

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-51, 2-62, 3-61, 4-78, 5-132, 6-164, 7-170, 8-177, 9-170.

BOWLING: Pollock 10-1-31-5; Matthews 10-1-37-2; de Villiers 9-2-25-1; Donald 10-0-41-4; McMillan 9-0-25-0; Cronje 9-0-8-0.

SOUTH AFRICA

A C Hudson lbw b Cork 5
G Kirsten c Russell b Cork 0
W J Cronje b White 78
J H Kallis c Hick b DeFreitas 97
S N McMillan c Hick b DeFreitas 13
J N Rhodes not out 12
S M Pollock not out 0
Extras (lb 2, w 3, nb 4) 9
Total (5 wds, 48.2 overs) 185

10 J Richardson, P S de Villiers, C R Matthews and A A Donald did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-1, 2-9, 3-127, 4-150, 5-183.

RESULTS SO FAR: Jan 8: Cape Town: South Africa won by six runs; Jan 11: Bloemfontein: England won by five wickets; Jan 18: Johannesburg: South Africa won by three wickets; Jan 14: Pretoria: South Africa won by seven wickets; Jan 17: Durban: South Africa won by five wickets.

MATCHES TO COME: Jan 19: East London; Jan 21: Port Elizabeth.

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صباحنا من الامم

Russians launch onslaught on rebels after declaring there is no hope for captives



A Grad rocket is fired by Russian forces yesterday towards the village of Pervomaikoye as they kept up the military pressure on the Chechen rebel hostage-takers

Rockets rain on hostage village

FROM CARLOTTA GALL
IN PERVOMAIKOYE,
THOMAS DE WAAL
IN MOSCOW
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

Russian forces set out to level the village of Pervomaikoye yesterday with a blizzard of rockets, saying there was "little hope" for any hostages after three days of bloody fighting with Chechen rebels.

In blowing snow on the steppes around the ruined village, hundreds of weary federal troops pulled back, and the Russians unleashed volley after volley of powerful Grad rockets. The cluster of small buildings came under rocket attack from helicopter gunships and was struck by rounds of artillery shells. Heavy machinegun fire in the late afternoon signalled con-

PERVOMAIKOYE ATTACK

tinued Chechen resistance. "We are pulling the troops out," said the commander of the Alpha special forces unit, wearing the distinctive green helmet fitted with a two-way radio and mouthpiece.

"Twice SOBR went in and twice they withdrew," he said, speaking of the Interior Ministry's rapid reaction unit, which lead the attempt to overrun the village. "They had heavy machineguns everywhere," he said of the Chechens, explaining why Russian forces failed to hold their positions.

Others described the Chechens using an intricate system of trenches for protection, along which they moved their heavy machineguns. "It was tough," said another special

forces officer. "We took losses." The officer said that there were still a few hostages alive of the 70 or so remaining in the village. He saw two dead. "There are some. They are sitting in cellars in holes they have dug themselves."

His men, their faces grubby under their helmets, their cheeks speckled with red marks from firing their rifles, climbed on to waiting buses. "We are all getting out and then we are going to screw them with the Grads," said one of the commanders.

Reporters were expelled by Russian military authorities from Pervomaikoye and neighbouring villages yesterday. The region, in the republic of Dagestan, is just across the border from Chechnia.

The Russians began storming the village on Monday, breaking a five-day standoff and refusing the Chechen demands for safe passage to their homeland. At the time, authorities said they resorted to force because the gunmen were killing hostages — an allegation denied by separatist leaders in Chechnia.

Earlier yesterday, Russian officials again claimed that they escalated the conflict because hostages were being killed. Major-General Aleksandr Mikhailov, a spokesman for the Russian intelligence service, said the gunmen planned to kill the captives and try to escape.

"Because the situation is becoming more complicated, we have decided to conclude the operation," he said. Asked about the hostages, he said: "We have little hope for them."

On the road leading to Pervomaikoye, he said facetiously that there were "no hostages" left in Pervomaikoye and the military had decided to "conclude" the operation by force. "We're no longer talking about a hostage-freeing operation," he said.

The Russians said that 41 of an estimated 116 hostages had escaped the battle unhurt. They admitted having 18 soldiers killed and 60 wounded, but the real figure may be much higher.

President Yeltsin has been under intense pressure to end the crisis decisively, but the political initiative has been all on the side of his opposition. Duma deputies yesterday lambasted Mr Yeltsin for botching his whole policy on Chechnia. "Neither the people, nor the generals, nor

the soldiers are responsible for this," said Ramazan Abdulatipov, a deputy from Dagestan. "The politicians are."

A statement adopted by an overwhelming majority of deputies condemned the Chechens for "using extreme forms of terrorist acts", but called on the Government "not to permit unjustified actions, which lead to the deaths of wholly innocent people".

Gennadi Seleznev, the Communist candidate for Speaker, was elected with 231 out of a possible 450 votes at the third attempt. His job carries no great constitutional powers, but it will give the Communists immense leverage over the new parliament.

Russian Public Television, the main state network, canceled all entertainment programming last night because of the fighting.

Removal of 'last reformer' hits \$9bn IMF deal

ECONOMY

By THOMAS DE WAAL

A VISIT to Moscow by an International Monetary Fund delegation was in confusion yesterday as negotiations to sign a \$9 billion loan package coincided with the resignation of the last man to symbolise radical reform in the Russian Government.

The enforced departure of Anatoli Chubais, sole surviving Minister from President Yeltsin's reforming team of 1992, has sent Western financial institutions and embassies in Moscow into shock. Shares on the emerging stock market lost 7 per cent to 10 per cent of their value on the news. As First Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the economy, he was seen as the patron of Western investment.

"Chubais made an amazing contribution to the progress of the Russian economy, both by pushing through the largest privatisation in any post-Communist country and by stabilising the inflation rate," said Richard Hayward, of the London School of Economics, who advised the Russian Government in 1992 and was in Moscow as Mr Chubais was resigning. "He will be very difficult to replace."

Mr Chubais's removal is a clear sop to voters for the Communist Party, which topped the poll in last month's elections. One of the 1992 reform team, he has long been a hate-figure for the parliamentary opposition. Yesterday he said "the President takes decisions not because of macroeconomic results, but because of the mood the electorate". The economy has shown signs of



Chubais's departure cut share prices

stabilisation in the past six months. The monthly inflation rate dropped to 3.2 per cent last month from almost 20 per cent at the start of 1995 and economic indicators suggest industrial production's fall is bottoming out. Now investors fear much of that may be in jeopardy.

Another Western economic expert in Moscow said Mr Chubais's departure was bad news because he was the "last protector" of junior ministers who were reforming the economy. Without his patronage their positions were virtually untenable, he said. The embarrassment is all the greater for the IMF delegation. Its head, Yuseke Horiguchi, reportedly said the deal was unaffected, but even before the resignation, IMF officials had signalled their worries about a change in economic policy after the Communists' election success. The package is worth \$9 billion over three years and is the second largest in the organisation's history.

The deal was negotiated by Mr Chubais and there may be a strong temptation for the IMF to try to renegotiate parts or to "backload" payments, offering the Government a small tranche this year in the hope of ensuring budgetary prudence while promising bigger payments next year. For the first time since 1991, Mr Yeltsin is without a Western-leaning economist in a high government position. In the past ten days he has also got rid of his generally pro-Western Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, and his liberal chief of staff, Sergei Filatov.

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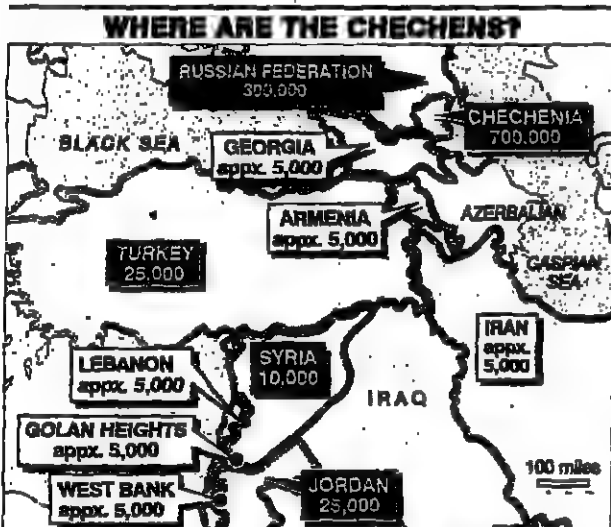
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Centuries of cloak-and-dagger struggle scar turbulent region

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR



Since their defeat in the middle of the last century the Chechens have been driven from their homeland

EVEN in ancient times, the Black Sea was regarded as dangerous and hostile. It was known as the Pontus Aëxius — the inhospitable sea — because of its remoteness from the Graeco-Roman world and its violent storms which blew up unexpectedly and wrecked many ancient ships.

The sea was, from ancient times, a vital trading route, and Greek colonies were established along the northern

CAUCASUS HISTORY

shores: indeed, as it became better known, the name changed to Euxinus — the opposite of its earlier appellation.

For hundreds of years, the mountainous and fertile lands around the sea saw a constant swirl of war, emigration and conquest, as invaders from the east and south reached the edge of Europe. But for 70 years, after 1917, all trade across the sea virtually ceased: the northern littoral was sealed behind the Soviet frontier while Turkey, which controls the vital Bosphorus exit, became a staunch member of the Western Alliance.

After the collapse of communism, trade resumed at a redoubled rate. Russians poured across into Turkey to buy consumer goods by the coachful and take them home on overcrowded ferries, at great profit. The scale of this unofficial "suitcase trade" is now so great that Turkey estimates it was worth about £4.5 billion last year — making Russia Turkey's second-largest trading partner. In 1995, an estimated one million Russians visited Turkey — as traders or tourists enjoying the resorts of the northern coast.

The Black Sea is now the centre of a new regional trading group, underpinned by Turkey, which brings together Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, the Transcaucasus, Albania, Romania, Greece and Bulgaria to the advantage of this new co-operation bloc that cuts across old alliances.

Throughout history, however, the Black Sea has been a strategic prize, vital to the interests of nations at war. The Bosphorus, no more than 750 yards wide at its narrowest, is by far the most vital waterway, and the cause of countless wars and diplomatic

tussles between Turkey and Russia. Its use is now strictly regulated by the 1936 Montreux Convention, but throughout the Soviet era Moscow was constantly testing the will of the Turks to enforce the accord.

The initial determination of the hijackers to sail to the Bosphorus and blow up the ferry there was a quick way of focusing world attention on the Chechen grievances by causing maximum damage and disruption. The tanker traffic through the waterway has now reached almost saturation point and accidents and collisions are an increasing risk. An explosion in the heart of Istanbul would not only block vital traffic: it could kill hundreds along the populated banks, or set off disastrous fires. The first priority for the Turkish Government must therefore be to prevent the ferry reaching the Bosphorus.

The Chechens have been resisting Russian rule for some 200 years, attempting in vain to protect their independence in the swirl of battle between the Russians and the Turks. Although only half the size of Switzerland, their homeland's strategic location has made it an almost permanent battleground; in the Sec-



Shamyl: waged war on Russians for 20 years

and World War, the Chechens were accused of aiding German invaders trying to secure the Caucasus oil reserves, and in 1944 Stalin deported the entire population, and the neighbouring Ingush people, to Central Asia. Some 200,000 died during the mass exodus; the survivors were allowed back only in 1957.

Today's strategic importance lies in the main oil pipeline that runs close to Grozny: the Russians are bidding to carry huge oil exports from the Caspian, and are determined to safeguard the pipeline route.

In their fight with the Russians, the Chechens and other turbulent Caucasian groups have looked to the West, especially to Britain. They appealed to Queen Victoria for help, and the Russo-Turkish wars preoccupied Palmerston and the British Government.

In the 1840s, the Russians began to suspect that British agents were operating among the Circassians, supplying them with arms and advice. Indeed, there was one Englishman who was actively helping them: James Longworth, a special correspondent for *The Times*, which supported the Circassian cause, spent months with the Mujahidin, not only reporting the fighting but organising resistance at the same time as Imam Shamyl, the great guerrilla hero, was stirring revolt across the mountains in Dagestan.

Shamyl, under the banner of jihadism, a brand of Sufi mysticism, spent more than 20 years in warfare with the Russians, taking advantage of the Crimean war and plotting with the allies. As Peter Hopkirk, the author of *The Great Game*, makes clear, the cloak-and-dagger struggle in the Caucasus was for years intimately linked to the titanic battle between the British and the Russians for control of Central Asia. Terrorism, then as now, played a key role.

Rights group set to reject Moscow again

By MICHAEL BINYON

THE Council of Europe is likely again to reject Russia's application for membership because of the fighting in Chechnia. The 38-member body, considered the yardstick and guarantor of democratic standards in Europe, had postponed accession because of fighting in the breakaway Russian republic last year.

The council, under whose aegis the European Court of Human Rights hears cases of human rights violations, will meet next Thursday in its Strasbourg headquarters to consider Moscow's long-

standing application. One council official said yesterday that the renewed fighting would inevitably influence the decision. Daniel Tarschys, the Swedish secretary-general, arrives in Moscow today. He will be accompanied by a representative of Denmark, which now holds the chairmanship of the council.

President Yeltsin has pressed hard for full membership of the council, and has expressed anger that other former communist countries have been admitted

while it has had only special guest status since its original application in May 1992. Moscow sees membership as proof that the West has fully accepted Russia as a democratic partner, and is increasingly furious at being kept in the waiting room.

On December 20 the political committee of the council's parliamentary assembly voted in favour of Russian accession. But the entire assembly needs to ratify the vote. In 1994, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of the right-wing Liberal Democratic Party, caused outrage by his anti-Semitic outburst during a visit to Strasbourg.

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Ministers accused of corruption quit Rao Cabinet

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN BOMBAY

THREE Cabinet ministers and the leader of India's main opposition party resigned last night as police moved to prosecute them in a £12 million bribery scandal.

The action against seven politicians, including a former Deputy Prime Minister, has stunned the political establishment in Delhi. Those who resigned last night were Madhav Rao Scindia, the Minister for Human Resource Development, and Vidya Charan Shukla, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, according to local news agencies.

Mr Scindia and Mr Shukla were two of the three ministers against whom federal police on Tuesday had requested permission to begin prosecutions in connection with the scandal. Balram Jakhar, the Agriculture Minister, had resigned earlier in the day.

The resignation of Lal K. Advani, leader of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as an MP to put pressure on the named ministers to quit clearly had the desired effect. He said he would not contest the general election expected in about three months unless he had been cleared of the charges. The BJP has seized on allegations of corruption in P. V. Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress party as a key plank in its campaign for the polls.

The Central Bureau of Investigation said he and the other accused were involved in a 650 million rupee bribe scandal. The bureau operates under the direct authority of the Prime Minister, giving him a powerful tool to investigate his political enemies. It is inconceivable that the bureau would have acted without consulting him.

The *Indian Express* reported yesterday that Mr Rao had "pulled off a coup of sorts with the CBI filing a charge sheet against his political opponents". Mr Rao was asked if Congress would be tainted by the scandal. "It will tarnish the image of all those parties involved," the Prime Minister said.

Devi Lal, the former Deputy Prime Minister, who is one of those charged, said: "Charges were framed, keeping in mind the main challengers to the Prime Minister's chair."

The allegations stem from public interest litigation filed by an investigative journalist alleging illegal payment of foreign funds, or *hawala*, to public servants from 1988 to 1991.

The bureau said the politicians were charged with "abatement to corruption", which meant accepting illegal gifts or bribes. About 115 leading politicians and civil servants have been named in a petition before the Supreme Court.

The accused say that the charges have been brought as a pre-election ploy.

Dipankar Gupta, the Solicitor-General, told a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court: "Investigations against the remaining politicians, bureaucrats and others is continuing and further action is expected to be taken shortly."

The allegations relate to foreign currency transactions involving overseas firms that won large government contracts. The Supreme Court in 1993 ordered the bureau to pursue investigations into the case after journalists filed a public interest petition saying that the inquiry had been halted because it involved prominent people.

The court, in upholding the petition, ordered that progress in the case should be reported every month to the Chief Justice.

Mr Advani led a protest march by supporters of his Hindu right-wing party from the parliament building in Delhi yesterday.

"The BJP is the principal challenger in the coming election," he said. "These charges have been filed on the eve of the election. It is a cooked-up case, a frame-up."



Advani: says the case has been cooked up

Aids campaign move

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS

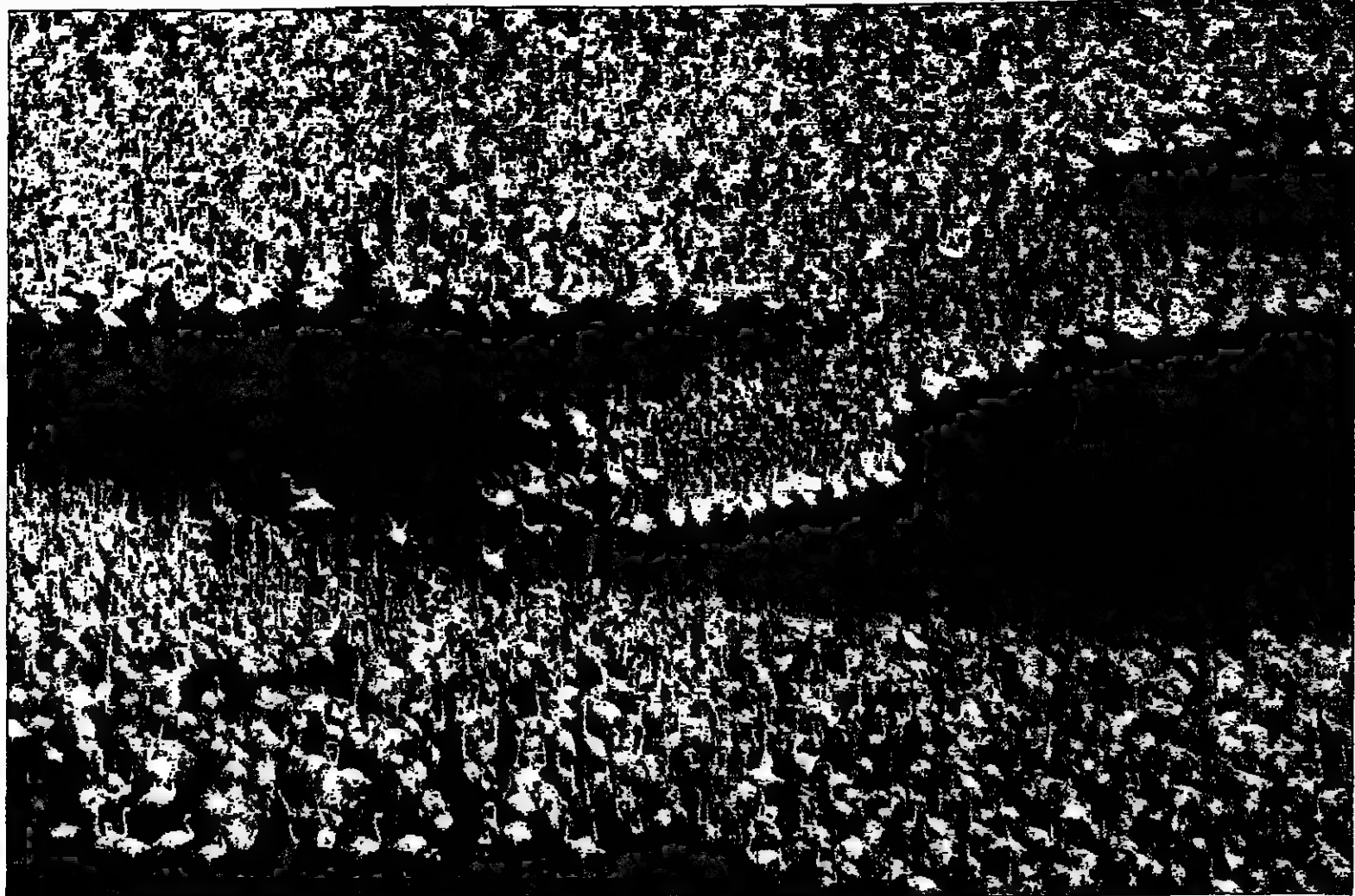
INDIA has set up a national Aids committee to co-ordinate an eradication campaign against the spread of HIV.

The first official attempt to tackle growing infection rates has meant sidestepping some taboos: there is now official admission that homosexuality and prostitution are widespread and that India is becoming the epicentre of the world Aids crisis.

With 65,000 prostitutes in red-light areas in Bombay, for example, and an estimated 90 per cent not insisting on their clients using condoms, India is heading for an Aids epidemic worse than Africa's. The Indian Health Organisation says that there will be 20 million to 50 million HIV-

positive people in four years. Dr I. S. Gilada, the secretary-general of the organisation, said an estimated 85 per cent of transmissions of HIV were through heterosexual contact. Homosexuals accounted for 3 per cent, 5 per cent came from transfusions of infected blood and most of the rest from intravenous drug abuse.

He added that the stigma associated with extramarital sex in India prevented people from having blood tests until the infection was advanced. In 1986, the Government broadcast foreign-made Aids warnings, but these were considered too explicit and withdrawn. Since then, there have been no public service messages.



Flamingo flocks like this are disappearing at an alarming rate from Kenya's Rift Valley, raising fears that pollution could be threatening the birds' survival — and tourist income (Sam Kiley writes).

Most badly hit is Lake Nakuru. One of the wonders of the natural world, the rose-coloured carpet of lesser flamingos feeding there has

Mystery of missing flamingos

been reduced to a tea towel. A census last week showed numbers had fallen from 1.9 million to 30,000. People in the area blame a drastic drop in the lake's water level and sewage and industrial pollution. Tourist lodges in Lake Nakuru National Park have

laid off workers because of a 40 per cent fall in visitors to see the birds feeding. "There is no conclusive evidence yet about what has happened to the chemistry of the [highly alkaline] lakes," said Oliver Nasirwa from the National Museum of Ke-

nya's department of ornithology. Lakes Bogoria and Elementaria, far from large towns, have also suffered a drop in flamingo numbers of up to 80 per cent.

This weekend there will be a census at Lake Magadi, near the Tanzanian border. Mr Nasirwa said: "We simply don't know where they have gone."

Portugal saves ice age engravings

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN PORTO

PORTUGAL has "permanently postponed" a half-built £300 million dam that would have destroyed the world's largest site of ice age engravings.

The engravings were discovered in a remote valley just over a year ago and archaeologists already believe the area, in the northeast near Foz Coa, may unlock secrets not only about what Stone Age man did, but what he thought.

At the launch in Porto of a 600-page book on the engravings, Manuel Maria Carrilho, the Culture Minister in the three-month-old Socialist Government, thanked *The Times* for leading the international campaign to save the thousands of engravings from

the hydroelectric scheme. He added that the area will be a national park.

Senior Carrilho accused the previous Government of being arrogant about the controversy, saying: "There is no doubt that if the SDP [Social Democratic Party] had won the elections, they would have continued the dam ... the country was divided fifty-fifty over the engravings because there was much local newspaper speculation that supported the SDP and questioned the authenticity of the engravings. But international experts [consulted by *The Times*] had weight and public opinion shifted in our favour."

"Now we will create a park as part of a regional development plan. It will have a cultural centre, youth hostel and young people will be trained as guides. We will continue studying the engravings and protect them. They are our history, our heritage and our roots. We must preserve our patrimony."

It is understood unofficially that the Government will eventually force the state electricity company to abandon the dam project. Antonio Guterres, the Prime Minister, wants to protect the environment and rethink a massive construction programme that has been transforming Portugal, not always for the better, since the country joined the

European Union in 1986. Jos6 Zilhao, 39, who is Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at Lisbon University, will co-ordinate the park project. He has a budget of about £1 million and expects up to a thousand visitors a day from this summer.

He said: "What is unique is that the state of the territory has been essentially unchanged since paleolithic times. One can see how people used the landscape. Like the Aborigines in Australia, they did not build monuments but turned the whole landscape into a monument. Coa is the only place in the world where we can see this."

Iraqi offer surprises oil traders

New York: Iraq offered yesterday to renew talks with the United Nations on selling limited amounts of oil to buy food for its suffering population (James Bone writes).

The move by Baghdad threw the oil market into confusion and prompted speculation that President Saddam Hussein's regime was running out of cash.

But it was unclear whether Iraq would agree to the "oil-for-food" scheme spelt out by the Security Council. The resolution permits Iraq to sell \$1 billion (£649 million) worth of oil every three months provided most of the crude is shipped by pipeline across Turkey, and some proceeds go towards helping the Kurds.

Alan Bond heads for fraud trial

Perth: Alan Bond, once one of Australia's richest men, has been ordered to stand trial in March for what prosecutors claim is the country's biggest ever corporate fraud case. Mr Bond and co-accused Peter Mitchell, an executive from his now defunct Bond Corporation, have pleaded innocent. The two men are accused of conspiring to defraud another company, Bell Resources Ltd, of \$400 million (about £200 million). (AP)

HIV woman may bid for Congress

Washington: Judith Billings, 56, the schools superintendent in Washington State who became HIV-positive more than a decade ago while trying to become pregnant by using donor sperm, may run for Congress this year. The liberal Democrat, who will decide by March whether to challenge the sitting Republican, said: "We need grown-ups in Congress."

Chun tries to overturn law

Seoul: Chun Doo Hwan, the former South Korean President on trial for plotting a coup 16 years ago, began a battle to nullify the law, adopted last month, that excluded presidential terms from the 15-year statute of limitations. He called it retroactive and thus unconstitutional. (AP)

Hubble captures death of a star

BY NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

A STAR in its death throes has been photographed by the Hubble space telescope, providing a foretaste of the Sun's fate. The image of planetary nebula NGC 7027 was presented to an American Astronomical Society meeting in San Antonio, Texas, this week, showing a huge gas cloud blown off around a star as it reaches the end of its life and dies to form a white dwarf.

NGC 7027 is about 3,000 light years away in the direction of the constellation Cygnus. Once it was a star about the same size as the Sun, but when it ran out of hydrogen to burn it began burning helium



Violent end: the demise of Nebula NGC 7027

and expanding to form a red giant 50 times larger than its original size. When helium burning stopped, the star contracted, blowing off the outer layers to form a series of concentric layers. The extremely hot core was then exposed, cooling to form a white dwarf. "When we saw

the photograph we were astounded by the exquisite wealth of detail," said Dr Howard Bond of the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. The Sun of our solar system has five billion years to go before it begins to turn into something like NGC 7027.

'Cosmo' succumbs to appeal of younger woman editor

FROM QUENTIN LEITS IN NEW YORK

HELEN GURLEY BROWN, the pioneering women's advocate and author, is to step down as editor of the American *Cosmopolitan* after 30 years.

The departure of Mrs Gurley Brown, 73, from the magazine through which she transformed the image of young women was presented as a gracious withdrawal. However, sources suggested that the circumstances of her move were not so benign. She was said to be finding it hard to work for a new boss — a woman.

Under the Gurley Brown editorship, "Cosmo" not only became the most successful women's magazine, but also vividly cast aside the moral lodges of the 1950s. Mrs Gurley Brown, glamorous and zestful, urged women to enjoy themselves and to display every tactic bestowed by their gender.

Not for her the man-hating, plain-faced dourness of certain feminists. Her 1962 bestseller *Sex and the Single*

Girl, based on her experience in 17 secretarial jobs, became a guidebook for the 1960s. In recent months *Cosmopolitan*, which is published in 27 countries under separate editors, has lost sales. Circulation dropped from three million to 2.6 million, and advertising revenue declined at least 8 per cent in the past year.

Hearst Magazines, which publishes *Cosmopolitan*, recently appointed a new president, Cathleen Black, who is expected to make changes to improve the company's performance. Reports suggested that she and Mrs Gurley Brown had their differences.

Competition from other women's magazines has increased, with many rivals using the Gurley Brown formula of sex, fashion and tips on how to keep your man. Mrs Gurley Brown is well qualified on that point, having been married to the same husband for 37 years.

The next editor of the American *Cosmopolitan* was announced as Bonnie Fuller, 39, editor of the American *Marie Claire*. Hearst Magazines said that the two women would work alongside each other for 18 months, with Mrs Gurley Brown training Fuller. One commentator said that the time lag gave Mrs Gurley Brown "enough rope to hang her successor" but other sources wonder how long the older woman will be able to endure the arrangement, and expect her to leave early.



Gurley Brown: pioneer of 1960s sexuality

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'The Queen did not like Diana much'

DIANA AND SARAH: RELATIONSHIPS ON THE ROCKS

Elizabeth's indulgence of her daughters-in-law, the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of York, was a worry to the Royal Household.

Whenever they wanted anything, Diana and Sarah would simply go to her over the heads of the Household and wheedle: "Oh, Ma'am, please, just this once..." the Household hate me," and so on. If approached from the other side, Elizabeth would say: "I can't interfere in my children's lives."

Although aware of the rumours about Sarah's behaviour with the Texan, Steven Wyatt (which her husband Prince Andrew steadfastly refused to believe), Elizabeth did not, apparently, know of the pact which both her daughters-in-law had made to separate from their husbands, according to Sarah's father, Major Ronald Ferguson, who told his mistress, Lesley Player about it in the spring of 1991. But at Sandringham that Christmas, Andrew and Sarah told her of their decision to separate on the grounds of incompatibility.

Calm but openly "disappointed", Elizabeth asked them to wait six months before taking an irrevocable decision. Privately, however, she was stunned. "I can't understand my children," she told a friend. "She [Sarah] didn't even try to be a naval wife..."

For Elizabeth, the period she had spent in Malta as a young naval wife had been one of the happiest experiences of her life. Although there were other aspects of the failure of the marriage which, sadly, she did comprehend, her daughter-in-law's selfish have-it-all, grab-it-all attitude was simply alien to her. Her eyes were beginning to be opened as far as the Duchess of York was concerned.

"Fergie isn't as nice as you think she is," a royal relation said. Sarah wanted sex, money, fun and excitement and she was prepared to sacrifice everything in order to get them. Incredibly, this woman was capable of self-delusion to the extent that she told her father later: "I'm 34, nearly 35, and I haven't lived my life at all..."

Even as Elizabeth delivered her Christmas 1991 broadcast she knew that her family life was crumbling around her, although she was not fully aware of the extent of the dissolution.

One phrase of that broadcast, intended as an affirmation of her continuing determination to go on serving the nation after 40 years on the Throne, was to come back to haunt her: "With your prayers and your help, and the love and support of my family, I shall try and help you in the years to come." (This was interpreted by various sections of the press as a slap in the face for Charles, sending a public signal that she did not intend to abdicate in his favour. It was no such thing: Elizabeth never had any intention of abdicating and never will.)

were stolen and taken to a tabloid newspaper.

Meanwhile, Mark Phillips had his own problems with allegations of affairs and a love-child. But Anne's popularity as one of the hardest-working members of the Royal Family (particularly for the Save the Children Fund) had seen her through. Mark Phillips behaved with dignity; the split had been amicable and the marriage was to be legally dissolved in April. Now Elizabeth knew there was to be a second marriage failure.

The publication of Andrew Morton's book *Diana: Her*

which had made them rich and celebrated.

Elizabeth went on as usual, publicly serene but privately both furious and deeply troubled.

The traditional ceremony for the celebration of her official birthday, Trooping the Colour, went ahead as if nothing had happened, with the Princess of Wales part of the family party on the Palace balcony for the RAF fly-past. Privately, however, both Elizabeth and Philip, who had been at pains not to take sides, rallied to Charles, and Philip wrote him a "long and sym-

pathetic letter" praising his "saint-like fortitude".

At Royal Ascot the following week, Philip for the first time showed hostility towards Diana, refusing either to look at her or speak to her. In private, Elizabeth and her son discussed for the first time whether he should take the initiative and separate from his wife. He consulted Lord Goodman, a celebrated lawyer and "fixer", about the implication of such a move, but for the moment did nothing.

At Ascot the disgraced Sarah took her daughters to wave to their grandmother as the royal procession moved down the course before the races. Elizabeth waved but inwardly she must have felt despairing at yet another public manifestation of what the press now liked to call her "dysfunctional" family (on the following race day, Andrew loyally joined his wife and daughters on the rails).

The royal show went on as if nothing had happened, but behind the scenes the atmosphere could have been cut with a knife. Guests at lunch noted that Elizabeth, unsurprisingly, seemed to be "in a pretty bad temper". There was an awkward atmosphere and before lunch the Queen stood alone with a semicircle of guests around her, none of whom were brought up to talk to her. With the exception of Blair Stewart Wilson, the Master of the Household, royal staff made no attempt to put the guests at their ease.

At the end of the month the Waleses attended a dinner to celebrate the Queen's fortieth anniversary at which five British Prime Ministers were present. In August, after a brief, disastrous attempt at a family holiday on the Greek millionaire John Latsis's yacht, they joined the family at Balmoral.

In the early days, Elizabeth had done little to make her daughter-in-law feel at home. Diana, she quickly realised, was not her type of girl. She was turning out to be emphatically not the country lover Charles had thought she was. She was interested in clothes, pop music, dancing and shopping. Horses and dogs, hunting, shooting and fishing, the

royal pastimes, bored her. "The Queen didn't really like Diana very much," an aide said. Later, when the Princess's behaviour became eccentric to the point of rudeness, Elizabeth simply did not understand her.

Although a kind person, she is not an imaginative one. Since Buckingham Palace had never seemed intimidating to her, she assumed wrongly that Diana would adapt to its atmosphere. She was unused to close contact with girls of Diana's age and had little idea of how they might react to these unusual surroundings.

Although the grim facts of the marriage were already widely known or guessed at, the Prime Minister's announcement to the Commons in December 1992 of their separation, which was carried on all the television networks, was still profoundly shocking. John Major took pains to emphasise that, in his view, the decision to separate has no constitutional implications. The implications of this statement brought a collective gasp from MPs, and no wonder. It was not merely papery over the cracks but wallpapering them with

fluffy flock.

The idea that the Princess of Wales, living apart from her husband and at daggers drawn with him, might be crowned Queen Consort struck most people as absurd. The bald statement that the Prince of Wales's succession as head of the Church of England was unaffected, although strictly constitutionally correct, also required some swallowing and it was not long before leading clerics came out publicly to say so.

Unfortunately for the

ham for Christmas 1993, was seen to be "burning" when the photographers massed to take pictures of Diana and packed up as soon as they had done so, ignoring the rest of the family. Although normally uninterested in publicity, she now took their attitude as a slight.

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Miners' compensation may lead to more claims

White with anger

THE miners have won their case to receive compensation for white finger disease, also known as Raynaud's phenomenon of occupational origin or vibration induced white fingers (VWF).

Although occupational VWF was first described in 1911, when it was noticed that American workers who used pneumatic chisels for stone cutting developed arterial spasm in their fingers, its relevance to mining was only realised comparatively lately. In Britain in the 1930s people who used pounding machinery in boot and shoe factories often developed Raynaud's. Initially, all those who suffered had been using tools which were power hammers. Later, those like the miners, who used cutting equipment which had a revolving action, also became victims.

Any machine which causes a rapid vibration may be a cause, since arteries can respond adversely to a wide range of vibrations.

As well as shoe workers, stone cutters, people using polishing machinery in the aerospace industry and chainsaw operators, a host of other workers in smaller trades must have also developed VWF and can expect to suffer dead, painful, useless fingers if they go out into the cold or if they become stressed. The miners may have set a precedent for a great many claims.

However, there are more cases of Raynaud's in cigarette smokers than in miners and it is found more often in women



MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttford

than in men. Dr Carol Black, a consultant in rheumatology at the Royal Free Hospital, London, whose great interest is Raynaud's disease, says that there may be ten million people in the United Kingdom who show some of its features. Sufferers will notice that their fingers turn white or blue and red. The change in colour, and with it a loss of sensation, tingling and pain, can be triggered by exposure to the cold or emotional stress.

The symptoms are the result of spasm in the small arteries in the fingers and occasionally arteries in other extremities.

The ear, nose and tongue may show similar changes. Repeated attacks may leave the fingers looking shiny, smooth and claw-like.

The cause of this primary Raynaud's is unknown and as many as 90 per cent of sufferers are female, usually young women. In secondary Raynaud's the use of vibrating machinery is only one of the many causes. One of the most important is the rheumatic disorder systemic sclerosis, affecting 10 per cent of all sufferers with progressive loss of tissue in their fingers, coupled with tightening of the skin in the fingers and on the face. Arterial changes in the vessels leading to the lungs, oesophagus, intestinal tract, kidney and heart can also occur.

In other instances Raynaud's can be secondary to the use of drugs including beta-blockers, nicotine and oral contraceptives, and to a wide variety of other diseases.

Facing a shock in the mirror

ONE OF my patients is a personable but tough Scottish international salesman. He attributes his success to his open face and ready smile. One night last autumn he went to bed suffering from a slight cold. Next morning he was horrified to find that half his face was paralysed: one of his eyes would not close properly and his enriching smile was replaced by a lop-sided grimace and drooling mouth. He had Bell's palsy, paralysis of the muscles supplied by the facial nerve.

Although the onset of the palsy is often associated with a cough, cold or minor infection, the root cause is unknown, but the possibility that it follows a viral infection has always been considered likely. Now researchers in Japan suggest that the cause is the herpes simplex virus, which is responsible for the common cold sore and genital herpes. They report in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* finding evidence of herpetic infection in 11 out of 14 cases of Bell's palsy. It is suggested that treatment should include acyclovir, an anti-viral agent, together with heavy doses of steroids.

Alarms about heavy metals

IN Stradbroke, Suffolk, there is a worry about lead in the glazing on porcelain beer mugs: in America anxiety still centres on mercury in tooth fillings. Whatever its nature, concern about heavy-metal poisoning has been a source of alarm for centuries. Dental surgeons deny that the standard amalgam filling, a mercury alloy, can result in mercury poisoning, and scientific evidence supports them. But in America demand for gold fillings rose by almost 20 per cent last year.

Popular mythology suggests that chronic mercury poisoning from tooth fillings can undermine a person's sex life, ruin their gums and cause loss of memory. In the past 30 years there have been major outbreaks of poisoning from eating fish caught in mercury-polluted seas or bread made from seeds sprayed with mercury dressings.

Chronic mercury poisoning causes a staggering walk, a tremor, difficulty in speaking, sore gums and mouth, and a loss of intellect. The term "mad as a hatter" comes from the insanity that used to afflict hat-makers who used mercury in preparing felt.

Florence Nightingale deserves our apology

A missed diagnosis can be serious. Dr James Le Fanu on the illnesses that often get overlooked

IT IS A great misfortune to be afflicted by some malady for which neither doctors nor their panoply of sophisticated tests can find a cause. Sooner or later it will be made clear that, as they can find nothing wrong, the symptoms must be psychosomatic or a manifestation of hypochondriasis. But what if this verdict is wrong? The consequences are well illustrated by two cases, the first of which, Florence Nightingale, is remembered as one of history's more famous invalids.

The reputation of this remarkable woman has always suffered from the charge that her personal life was the antithesis of the virtues she promoted in public. Her aims may have been loving and humanitarian, her administrative gifts exceptional, her writings a masterpiece of lucidity and common sense, but her personal relationships were cold and her attitude to others tyrannical.

These personality traits became particularly marked after her return from the Crimea at the age of 37, when she became a chronic invalid, rarely rising from her bed. It has been alleged by her biographers that this was a sophisticated form of malingering, a means by which she could better manipulate those around her.

"Her indeterminate illnesses did not give her doctors much to work on," observes the historian, Professor F. B. Smith. "It remains indisputable that whenever Miss Nightingale announced herself to be ill, she was busy."

History, it seems, owes Miss Nightingale an apology. Her illness was genuine, the cause of not only great physical



After her return from Crimea, Florence Nightingale became a chronic invalid. But her illness was genuine

distress but also of a profound melancholia which, together, more than explain the change in her personality.

The vital clue, argues Dr David Young, formerly principal scientist at the Wellcome Foundation, lies in the severe feverish illness to which she succumbed while in the Crimea and which left her emaciated, pale and extremely weak. Though labelled Crimean Fever at the time, there is little

Following a relapse in 1861, Miss Nightingale was bed-ridden for the next six years with spinal pain so severe she was unable to change position, and which was eventually only relieved by opium injections.

Finally, around the age of 60, the illness burnt itself out. "Gone was the cold, obsessed tyrant who rejected as inadequate the devoted services of her closest allies," Dr Young observes. "As her character blossomed in its benevolence, this emaciated woman became a dignified, stout old lady with a large good-humoured face."

Nowadays, brucellosis can be diagnosed with antibody tests and cured with antibiotics, but sometimes the symptoms of a chronic infection can be dismissed as hypochondriasis.

As the editor of the *Finnish Medical Journal*, Dr Ilkka Vartiavaara had excellent medical connections but they proved to be of little help when, in 1967, he developed a range of puzzling symptoms. It started with pains in the joints, followed by a permanent sensation of cold, then an alteration in the sensation of the skin and deteriorating eyesight. Possibilities such as

multiple sclerosis and brain cancer were considered, along with other illnesses, but all scans and tests proved negative.

He recalls in *The Lancet*: "I knew I was seriously ill, but transferring this belief to my colleagues was not easy. I felt myself gradually becoming a 'problem patient'. The dissatisfaction of my doctors could be clearly read between the lines, in their words and the frowns on their faces. Eventually, the hospital said there was nothing more they could do."

But his luck had not completely run out. Dr Vartiavaara mentioned, to an American correspondent how, just before the start of his illness, he had been bitten by a bed-bug while attending an international conference in Vancouver. She immediately suggested Lyme disease —

caused by the tick-borne bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*. "Soon afterwards I found myself in hospital. I still felt awful, but also good because I knew why I was so ill."

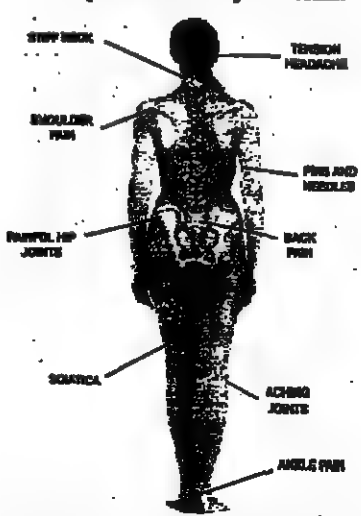
Lyme disease is curable with high doses of antibiotics injected directly into the vein, but for Dr Vartiavaara the delay in his diagnosis proved to have been too long as the bacterium had already caused irreparable damage.

Lyme disease and brucellosis have much in common. After the acute phase, they tend to attack the muscles and nerves causing pain which, though only too obvious to the sufferer, may be difficult for others to interpret. They also cause irritability and depression which can convince doctors that the problem lies in the mind rather than the body. But the consequences of failing to make the correct diagnosis can be devastating — as these two examples show.

The vital clue lies in her severe Crimean fever

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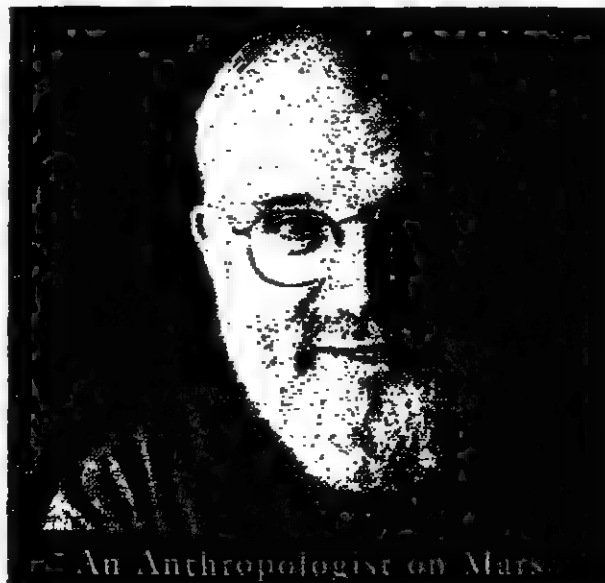
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50 من الأصناف

Tom Rhodes in Washington on the latest political storm

A slip which could cost Dole the presidency

THE BLIZZARDS that have swathed Washington in 3ft of snow claimed their most political victim this week when Elizabeth Dole, wife of the leading Republican presidential candidate, slipped on ice and fractured her wrist while out walking the dog.

For Mrs Dole, who has briefly left the presidency of the American Red Cross to pursue her husband's final attempt at the White House, the injury has proved a minor irritation that should heal in time for the campaigning ahead.

A simultaneous political storm, emerging from a long career that has left a trail of policy decisions and private financial transactions, is unlikely to blow away with such ease.

Already *The New Yorker* magazine has turned its spotlight on her past, suggesting she had benefited financially from special treatment because of the political activities of her

The New Yorker controversy, raising issues that surfaced during Mr Dole's presidential campaign in 1988, centres on David Owen, for 20 years one of the senator's closest aides in Kansas before he was convicted of tax fraud.

He spent much of that time managing Mrs Dole's personal investments, placing them in a blind trust while she served in government. The magazine suggests that Mrs Dole was given special treatment on several occasions.

Mrs Dole has dismissed the allegations and Mr Owen has said she was not actually told of blind-trust investments prior to any transaction.

The Doles have made every attempt to minimise the relationship they once had with Mr Owen, a course strikingly similar to that taken by the Clintons with once-favoured associates in Arkansas.

More than that, the revelations have come at a time when American politics is being governed by semantics. If pundits throughout the country are debating whether 60 hours of work in Arkansas by Hillary Clinton can be described as "minimal", should not Elizabeth Dole, a trained lawyer with top-flight degrees from Duke and Harvard who spent time at Oxford, be expected to read her own financial statements?

This may be the first electoral reminder that beneath the charming southern veneer of Elizabeth Dole lies an ambition that has already taken her to the top of the departments of transportation and labour, as well as the American Red Cross. She has harboured ambitions for the presidency as well as the vice-presidency and, since student days, has wanted to be married to the President of the United States.

Until now, the woman described by Lyndon B. Johnson as "a sugar-coated magnolia" has managed to disguise her single-minded intent, but just as conservative America thought it had seen the back of one dabbling First Lady, another is apparently waiting chameleon-like in the wings.



Elizabeth Dole

How I wrote the book, got the dog and fixed the film

Little did Valerie Grove know how big an impact writing *Dodie Smith's biography* would have on her own life

"I WRITE THIS sitting in the kitchen sink." Until recently I had never read the famous opening line of *Dodie Smith's I Capture the Castle*, but every woman I met (and several men) had. It had been in print for 45 years, a favourite with young girls and their mothers. Antonia Fraser told me it contained the most erotic scene ever written: Armistead Maupin based a novel on its format; and even the unromantic Alan Brien (the least sentimental man in the world, as his wife Jill Tweedie said) thought it a strangely beguiling work.

Then I was asked to write *Dodie Smith's biography* by the novelist Julian Barnes, her literary executor.

I had imagined the dog-loving Dodie to be a sweet little old lady, the author of 1930s plays like *Dear Octopus*, later an admired autobiographer of her flapper-girl youth on the stage, and as a salesgirl at Heal's in the 1920s.

Early in 1991 I happened to be interviewing Gwen Frangon-Davies on her 100th birthday, for *The Times*. After leaving her cottage I was driven back to Audley End station, and we passed a thatched cottage, closed and shuttered. "That was Dodie Smith's house," she had died six months before. "What happened to her last dalmatian?" I asked. I was told that Charley had died of a broken heart.

A few months later Julian Barnes rang. The hall of his house was now cluttered with Dodie's papers, to be shipped to Boston University. Carmen Callil, Julian said, wanted to publish a biography. She told me: "Read *I Capture the Castle*, then you'll do it."

She was right. I was captivated like so many others from page two, where Rose, the more beautiful of the two sisters who live in penury in a Suffolk castle, says she will go on the streets if necessary, to make some money, and Cassandra retorts briskly that she can't very well go on the streets in the depths of Suffolk. It was sharp and witty and full



Dodie Smith and Charley, her last dog: nagged by her lost fame, she wrote *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* in a state of furious resentment

of bizarre characters — and I knew that Dodie herself would be an interesting character.

I did not realise how interesting. After reading all her books and meeting her surviving friends, I got to snow-bound Boston in February 1994. Her diaries, which ran to millions of words, revealed that the lover she had called "Oliver" in her published memoirs was in fact Sir Ambrose Heal, the Terence Conran of his day. He already had a wife and a rather grand mistress, Lady Maufe, but Dodie told him shamelessly she would be content with "crumbs from a rich man's table". The character of "a young girl poised between childhood and adultery" resurfaced again and again in her novels.

There was also the faggotry. Dodie's circle of friends were almost all gay: Isherwood, John van Druten, Noel and Binkie etc. She preferred her menfolk untrammelled by wives and children — she never wanted children herself. Isherwood regarded her as one of the few people he could discuss his work with. When she came home from her long exile in America, she became fascinated by Julian Barnes, who arrived in 1969 at her cottage aged 22, a friend of her husband's half-sister Laurien: hence his literary executorship.

Several reviewers have remarked on what an unsympathetic creature Dodie was — selfish, egotistical, nagged by her lost fame and success when plays like *Dear Octopus* were superseded by angry young playwrights. But for a biographer this was a rich vein. It was in a state of furious resentment that she wrote *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* in 1956. When Disney bought it for his cartoon film, one of the most successful and money-spinning ever, it kept her going financially for years. And Pongo and Cruella de Vil have joined the immortals of children's literature.

There are two cheering postscripts to my story of a storyteller.

The first was that the moment I finished the book, I acquired a dalmatian puppy whom we named Beezie (Dodie's married name was Beesley) who happens to be the best-looking, best-natured dog in the world.

The other postscript is cinematic. When the original Disney dalmatians cartoon came out in 1961, Dodie wrote to Walt, peevishly complaining about the smallness of her credit at the end. "If you write me another of your cute little stories," Disney wrote back, "I will see that your credit is plenty large." Dodie at once sent him *I Capture the Castle* — it had been optioned many times since its publication in 1949 — which Disney snapped up for \$50,000 as a vehicle for Hayley Mills. But although screenplays were written,

the film was never made.

At last, while I was writing the book, Dodie's estate managed to exchange the rights to *I Capture the Castle* for Disney's right to remake *101 Dalmatians*.

When I heard this, last February, I wrote to the film director Mike Newell, who was in Hollywood because of *Four Weddings and a Funeral's* Oscar nominations. I picked Newell because he had used my drawing-room to shoot a scene of a previous success: *Four of his*,

Enchanted April. I thought he dealt beautifully with Elizabeth von Arnim's exquisite novel about four women who leave dreary London for an Italian palazzo, and I thought he might work a similar translation to the screen for Dodie's oddly beguiling little masterpiece.

Last week I heard the thrilling news that Mark Shivas has secured *I Capture the Castle* as a feature film for BBC Films, and Mike Newell is indeed going to direct it. I wonder who will play the 17-year-old Cassandra? A terrific role for some budding mega-

star. (In 1954, when it had a brief run as a play at the Aldwych Theatre, Cassandra was played by Virginia McKenna, who won plaudits even from hard-hearted critics like Ken Tynan.)

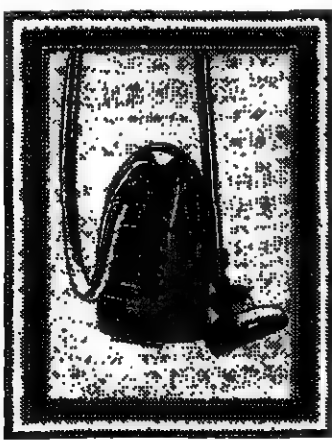
We shall see. It is certainly going to be a very good year for Dodie Smith — her centenary year. And she would have loved seeing *I Capture the Castle* on screen at last.

Dear Dodie by Valerie Grove is published this week by Chatto & Windus at £22. There is a Kaleidoscope Special on Dodie Smith on Radio 4, Saturday, 7.30pm.

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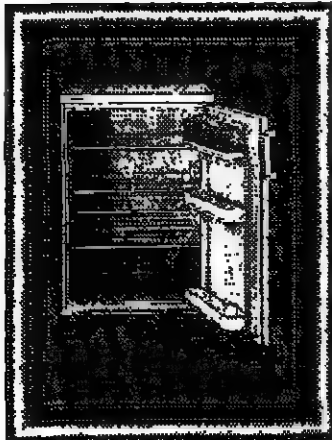
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هنا من الفصل

Government by patriots, not quislings

Max Beloff calls for a coalition against European federalism

We find ourselves, at the beginning of 1996, in a very modelled political situation, in which serious argument has little place and much time and energy are devoted to shadow-boxing, both between parties and within them. One reason is that the commentators on whom we rely to explain what is going on are inhibited by a political vocabulary which does not fit the current picture. Why, after all, should we, more than 200 years after they were first coined in relation to France's revolutionary assembly, go on using "Left" and "Right", as though all the issues that divide us could conveniently be encompassed by these terms? They barely help with understanding the Labour Party, they make no sense at all when applied to the Conservatives.

The reason is not just the passage of time, but the fact that the all-important question of the day to which answers are required concerns Britain's relations with the rest of Europe. How that question is answered determines everything else. The fact that "Europe" usually appears quite low down when the voters are polled on what they think of as most important merely indicates that our leaders have not so far managed to explain why this question is so crucial — though there is some evidence that, both here and on the Continent, understanding of the matter is beginning to make strides.

The reason the importance of the issue is still underestimated is that a question cutting across lines of class and party is very rare and usually confined to wartime. The fashionable comparison of divisions in the Conservative Party to the Corn Law crisis of the 1840s is absurd. That crisis was the product of circumstances and personalities unique to that juncture in the nation's affairs. The decision to embark upon a policy of free trade had repercussions upon other political decisions still to come, but it did not determine them.

The question raised in relation to Britain's European role is of another order of magnitude. It is the kind of question that nations usually confront only when at war. The inhabitants of a country overrun by a conqueror have to choose between accepting his authority (collaboration) and denying it (resistance in the hope of liberation). The arguments can be ambiguous in their translation into action, as the recent reminders of the late François Mitterrand's role in the Vichy period have made abundantly plain.

What is clear also is that all other questions of policy fall into abeyance for the conquered nation, since its policies will be determined by the will of the conqueror. From Napoleon's Europe to Hitler's Europe, the lesson is the same. If that is not understood in Britain today, it is only because Britain's fighting men saved this country from both experiences. We seem to breed quislings in peacetime.

After long experience, we

have a Government which has arrived painfully at a full understanding of what is really at stake. If we were to accept the views of Jacques Santer, the European Commission President, on what the forthcoming inter-governmental conference (IGC) should do — and in particular the extension of majority voting — and if Britain were to accept entry into a single currency, we would have surrendered our remaining powers of democratic decision-making in two vital aspects. Both our legislative capacity and our control over foreign and defence policy would have been given up to bodies in which we would have only a minority voice.

Entry into the proposed single currency would mean that no future British government would be able to have either a monetary or a fiscal policy of its own. Since Conservative governments would not have the freedom to follow their own preferences and Labour governments would be equally constrained, it would hardly matter whether the dominant mood was for the "Right" or for the "Left".

No doubt there are individuals in all three of our parties who would not object to this outcome; but they can only preserve their political role by indulging in obfuscation — pretending that one could have and maintain a single currency while allowing individual governments to decide upon interest rates or the levels of taxation. But experience makes it unlikely that they can continue to maintain their credibility.

What happens, however, if at the IGC and the future European summit Britain proves to be isolated? It will then become a question of whether the effort to remain within the European Union, if it survives, is still worth making. It may be that, before the end of the century, a British government will be obliged to embark upon the difficult task of disentangling itself from the Treaties of Rome and Maastricht in order to work out a new — and one hopes happier — relationship with its neighbours.

It is likely (opinion polls notwithstanding) that the problem will be confronted initially by a Conservative government. But the issue is so serious that it might prove more desirable for the final steps to be taken by a National government, in which elements in the Labour Party who would still wish to see Britain self-governing could be brought into a Cabinet which would have this as its sole or major task.

To prepare for such an eventuality and to follow what is actually happening in Europe and beyond, rather than repeating the empty rhetoric of a generation ago, seems to be the proper task for the coming years of all those to whom British identity is more than an empty shell.

Lord Beloff's book *Britain and the European Union: A Dialogue of the Dead* will be published in the summer.



The tiger and the dragon

Chris Patten's popularity proves that Hong Kong will survive 1997

Hong Kong is one of the great cities of the world at a peak moment in its history. Rome at the time of the Emperor Augustus, Venice in the age of Titian, London in the year of Waterloo, New York in the Roaring Twenties must all have had this heady feeling of unlimited energy, of being the city of the future. The energy seems never to cease, by day or night. I awoke early on my first morning here; the clock on the Star Ferry terminal was showing 6.15am, well before dawn; the Hong Kong traffic was almost as busy as at midday. Modern Hong Kong makes any European city seem feeble by comparison. It is the strongest possible symbol of the rise of Asia.

Yet Hong Kong faces an imminent event which no world city, when rising to the height of its power, has ever had to experience before. On July 1, 1997, just 18 months away, the sovereign power will pass from Britain to China. This transfer will occur without the people of Hong Kong being consulted, without the option of independence, and it will take Hong Kong from a democracy to a non-democratic authority. The transfer will be followed by the dissolution of the partly democratic Legislative Council, the appointment of a new chief executive and the threatened change to the Bill of Rights.

The majority of the people of Hong Kong have not been given the right to a British passport. We are leaving them with no protection to fall back on. It is an extraordinary and in some ways a shameful transaction. Neither the people of Hong Kong nor of Britain believe that it could have been avoided — the nationalist determination of China to regain Hong Kong could not have been resisted. But it is still shameful for Britain, because the colonial government was itself afraid of democracy, or even of equality of opportunity, for far too long. Only in the late 1970s, a bare 20 years ago, did Chinese people gain equal opportunities in the higher civil service. The Chinese experts who advised successive British governments appealed the Chinese fear of democracy almost right up to the end. Only the last Governor, Chris Patten, has been a genuine democrat in his heart.

Hong Kong opinion itself is divided. There is a very wealthy elite, which has benefited from high real estate prices and low taxes, who are at little risk themselves. They have their overseas passports; they have large offshore funds. Some, though

not all of them have joined the chorus of Chinese criticism of Chris Patten, protesting against the modest advances towards democracy he has tried to make. There has been much talk of the potential loss of business, some of it exaggerated. In fact these Hong Kong business people are increasingly optimistic about the deals they will be able to do with China — the Hong Kong Stock Exchange has been rising sharply. Chris Patten has followed policies which Britain ought to have pursued at least a generation ago. He came too late to his office for his policies to have become irreversible. But he did win and has kept the support of the mass of the Hong Kong people, particularly of those who do not have the security of foreign passports, overseas bank accounts or second homes in Vancouver. His approval ratings in the opinion polls have never fallen below 50 per cent, and now stand at the extraordinary level of 74 per cent, despite the well-understood fact that his power is waning as the Chinese takeover comes nearer. He is probably now the most popular head of government in any significant country on Earth, three or four times as popular as Alain Juppé or John Major, and five times as popular as Boris Yeltsin. That is because the ordinary people of Hong Kong know that he believes in the democracy which Britain failed in the past to give them, and which China certainly intends to deny them. They see Chris Patten as being on their side, despite the fact that he is the representative of the colonial power which will not give them the security of passports, and even though he is not Chinese and does not even speak their language.

The future of Hong Kong will be decided by the future of China. For the past 15 years China has enjoyed unprecedented economic growth as a result of liberalisation, though that has not been accompanied by progress towards political democracy. In wealthier provinces, the economy has been expanding at around 15 per cent a year, which means doubling every five years. The open economy has spread through most of China —

accompanied by increasing corruption, by an excessive enrichment of the political class, and has resulted in growing hostility between the richer and poorer provinces, and between the cities and the peasants. In China, more than anywhere else on Earth, the economy of the 21st century is running side by side with the economy of the Middle Ages. There is also a dangerous division between the Communist power structure and the People's Liberation Army. Furthermore, there is pressure from the ethnic and religious minorities, of which Islam is the largest and most militant but Tibet has the strongest international appeal. This week a Deputy Party Secretary announced in Tibet that "We must further strengthen control over temples and monasteries, continue the patriotic education of monks and nuns and take control of other religious sites." That sinister pronouncement was reported in *The South China Morning Post*, which is sympathetic to China, and it hardly gave reassurance in Hong Kong.

There is still room for an optimistic view. Hong Kong is very robust, as all the great trading cities of history have been. London has been burnt three times in 2,000 years, by Boudicca, by the Great Fire of 1666 and by Hitler's Luftwaffe, and it has recovered each time. In the past 60 years, Hong Kong has been brutally occupied by the Japanese and has survived decades with Chairman Mao as a threatening neighbour. Hong Kong will survive whatever happens in China, and will recover even if the worst occurs. China's Government may be excessively nervous and defensive, but policy does not all move in one direction. This week has seen further repression of religion generally. That is negative. It has seen "the full threat of army action" against Taiwan. That too is negative. But the Foreign Ministry has also given a press conference to announce that the National People's Congress is going to limit detention without trial. The police will in future only be able to hold suspects for a month, and for certain reasons.

Hong Kong is the city of success about to come under the control of a nation in a turmoil of change. That will be an alarming experience, but it will offer opportunities as well as dangers. In the scale of China's future, the wealth, the people, the ideas and the energy of Hong Kong can all be put on the positive side.

Then, when everything seemed set, Shivaji got the urge. "He was in a sexual frenzy. Killed two people and gored another cow," says Shand, who was at London Zoo yesterday publicising a campaign to save the Arabian Oryx. "I hope he has calmed down and we'll soon hear the thunder of tiny feet."

He was nothing if not candid, the late Richard Cobb, Oxford's former Professor of Modern History. As chairman of the Booker Prize in 1984, he appalled London's literati by boasting about having read only two pages of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* before flinging it aside for something ruder. "Just like everyone else who says they have read it," he explained.

This is a grudge match, says P.H.S.

the Amber Valley MP. "The French initially refused to play us, but we humiliated them into agreeing by leaving a box of tennis balls outside the French Embassy."

a reference to Shakespeare's *Henry V*, in which the Dauphin gives the English king a gift of the same as an insult. "It's not the playing that counts — but the winning."

Philip Oppenheim is taking his players to Paris tomorrow for the annual match against the French Parliamentary team.

"This is a grudge match," says P.H.S.

THE RED-BLOODED trade minister who reportedly enjoyed a healthy canoodle with a topless model last year is keen on his mainly pursuits. As captain of the Commons and Lords rugby team, Philip Oppenheim is taking his players to Paris tomorrow for the annual match against the French Parliamentary team.

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A French historian at Oxford

Norman Stone

salutes the spirit

of Richard Cobb

At a grand reception for the visiting French President, the royal equerry inquired after Professor Cobb, saying the Queen would like to meet him. "Ah, perhaps not," he said, when he saw the professor in an alcove, much the worse for wear. That sort of thing happened quite often to Richard Cobb, who died this week aged 78. Indeed, it has happened to a long line of distinguished scholars, not least the great 18th-century Cambridge classicist Richard Boscawen. To be seen, if Trinity legend has it right, is impossible in the arms of two barges. Nowadays, heroic drinking of this class is quite out of order, but it was a part of what made Richard Cobb tick. He knew the French Revolution inside out, was an outstanding teacher, and wrote some of the finest English historical prose of this century.

I remember my first reading of Cobb. It was a volume of essays called *A Second Identity*, which had an extraordinary breadth, fantastical erudition, and a style as memorable as Orwell's or A.J.P. Taylor's. "Despite much failing and whirling, this crenellated narrative never quite gets off the ground," he said of one otherwise well-received book.

Cobb had been sent to a French family in the Thirties. He loved the ease of social life there, free from the cramped worlds of Tunbridge Wells and Shrewsbury, being taught how to behave badly while learning to speak and write French superbly.

His youthful experience of France contrasted with a more painful one in Dollfus's Austria. His mother had sent him to learn German in the house of Felix Salten, the author of *Bambi*, but, with Quaker sympathies, had given him subversive literature to distribute around the working-class districts. He was picked up by policemen with feather-brushes in their hats, and kicked all along the Ottakringer Hauptstrasse, as women with huge, baleful faces stared out of the tenement windows, their elbows encased in an elbow-accommodating device known as *accoudoirs*. Thus he acquired a hatred of bossy governments.

When, after the war, he went back to France, he lived for years — legend has it — more or less as a *clochard*, looked after, for a time, by the French Communist Party. It did not know what it was doing for it never had a worse English enemy than Cobb, who he mocked its dinners, where he would spoon his way down to the end of the soup and gradually see the face of Picasso's Stalin ("the coryphaeus of the arts and sciences") emerge at the bottom of the plate.

"Napoleon, that shit," he would say. You might have expected him to revere Napoleon, who, after all, reintroduced order after the Terror. For Cobb, Napoleon was just a big bully, the sort of power-crazed monster whom revolutions create. You were much better off in the world of the festering *ancien régime*, said Cobb; you could rely on it for a laugh, and it would in the end be human. For another of Cobb's dislikes was the technocrat, offering concrete buildings and dead prose and fussy bureaucratic inquiries. He truly hated what had been done to the Paris of his youth by ghastly products of schools of administration.

Cobb was very French in his hatred of small nationalities. To this subject he devoted some of his best invective. He wrote an essay about the Belgian-Flemish fascist Joris van Severen: the rudest and most literate thing ever written about Flemish nationalism, which Cobb detested. It drew endless protests in the TLS afterwards. But he knew what had happened in Belgium during the war, and could not see why van Severen, a *frustration* with perfect French, could ever bother with tinpot nationalism.

He spent some years at Aberystwyth, and hated Welsh nationalism with equal venom. His dislike of Irish nationalism underlay perhaps his most notorious book, *A Classical Education*, in which he described the murder by an Irish school friend of his mother. Since Cobb, then an undergraduate, knew something about this, he found himself wanted for extradition, and fled abroad — the best excuse of all time for postponing a tutorial.

What made Richard Cobb possible? That he was part of an elite mattered: friends would cover up for the eccentricities, and loved him for them. He was also very well educated, with an astonishingly broad knowledge of English and French literature. His *Invitations* were quite chaotic, but when he got his Oxford chair, he could still just about afford a house within walking distance of his college. He needed to walk the bank threatened to foreclose until he was awarded an CBE.

Nowadays, he would not find it easy to collect half a dozen undergraduates for a special subject involving French as a foreign language, and would be having to fill out forms designed by technocrats to be read by computers, listing his "research output". So the little Napoleonic war. But I have a feeling that the memory of Richard Cobb will cheer his country's posterity when they lie a-mouldering in their concrete.

The author is Professor of Modern History at Oxford.

Tight ship

THE QUEEN looked to her family archives before making it quite clear to the Duchess of York that Buckingham Palace would not step in to clear her debts. Another royal debtor was given similarly short shrift by the monarch.

Princess Mary Adelaide, the Duchess of Teck and mother of Queen Mary, was a woman with a girl's large as her overdraft with Coutts & Co. She also owed vast sums to tradesmen.

Eventually, in 1878, she took her begging bowl to her cousin, Queen Victoria, who was far from amused. "If once it is done, it will be asked for again and again," declared Victoria, who ordered Princess Mary to give up either her home in Kensington or White Lodge in Richmond Park. "It was far too much for her to undertake to keep up two houses," commented the Queen acidly.

The sad lesson for the Duchess of York is that financial cutbacks, even huge ones, don't get the Princess out of a scrape. With her husband and her daughter, she was forced to go abroad and live in villas borrowed from friends.

Her daughter, Queen Mary, consequently lived a life of frugality, commenting towards the end of her life: "My parents were always in short street." Her thrift set the example for subsequent generations — as the Prince of Wales can readily attest. He was once ordered by his mother, who keeps her butler-wraps in the fridge, to scour Sandringham's grounds for many hours for a lost Corgi lead. "Corgi leads cost money," insisted Her Majesty.

Burns night
THE WORLD'S oldest entertainer is too ill to attend his 100th birthday celebrations this week. A bout of flu has kept him confined to his home in Los Angeles since his last outing as a guest at Frank Sinatra's Christmas party.

George Burns, the cigar-wielding comedian known to friends and admirers as God, was due to attend a gala dinner in his honour on Tuesday in Beverly Hills. Instead he sent his regrets. "As this big day came closer and closer people kept asking me what I would like for my 100th birthday," the vaudeville veteran said in a statement read to 500 guests at the Four Seasons Hotel. "What do you give a man who's been so blessed? Another 100 years? A night with Sharon Stone?"

Should that stalker ever catch up with Madonna, he will find her

well prepared. She has started a course of boxing lessons with a martial arts instructor and low-budget movie-star, Paul Mordant, who is a tenth degree black belt. Already, she can fell a man with one blow.

Nellie's way

CAMILLA Parker Bowles's brother, Mark Shand, has marital difficulties. He has been trying to fix up Tara, the female elephant he owns in India, with a husband — and the road to the altar is proving bloody.

First off, the groom Shivaji works in a national park and so is officially recognised as a government employee — a mass of Indian bureaucracy had to be negotiated before he could meet his bride.

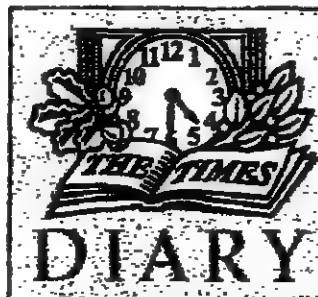
Then, when everything seemed set, Shivaji got the urge. "He was in a sexual frenzy. Killed two people and gored another cow," says Shand, who was at London Zoo yesterday publicising a campaign to save the Arabian Oryx. "I hope he has calmed down and we'll soon hear the thunder of tiny feet."

He was nothing if not candid, the late Richard Cobb, Oxford's former Professor of Modern History. As chairman of the Booker Prize in 1984, he appalled London's literati by boasting about having read only two pages of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* before flinging it aside for something ruder. "Just like everyone else who says they have read it," he explained.

This is a grudge match, says P.H.S.

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SEA OF TROUBLES

Yeltsin is drowning — and the West must look beyond him

The hammer-blows inflicted by last month's Russian parliamentary elections are beginning to take their toll. Andrei Kozyrev, the longest-serving liberal in President Yeltsin's Cabinet, resigned on taking up his Duma seat, and has been replaced as Foreign Minister by Yevgeni Primakov, an old-style *aparatchik*, who promptly indicated a return to more confrontational policies. On Tuesday Anatoli Chubais, virtually the sole economic reformer left in Russia's Government, quit, unceremoniously forced out by Mr Yeltsin's denunciation of his record in masterminding mass privatisation. More resignations are expected of key figures. The purge of the reformers is virtually complete; Mr Yeltsin is looking more and more like a traditional, conservative Soviet leader.

The reshuffle was not an automatic result of the elections, which brought back in force the reconstituted Communists and gave Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's virulent nationalists the second largest block of seats. Mr Yeltsin still has huge residual powers to govern by decree and to determine the make-up of his Cabinet. But he has sensed the shift in mood, the disillusion with reform and the increasingly vocal anger directed at all those associated with *pro-Western* or *pro-market* policies. With his popularity at an all-time low and amid a corroding cynicism about the "sick old man" in the Kremlin, he has jettisoned his former allies, his principles and his promises in an attempt to save his own vainglorious bid for re-election.

Economists maintain that the dismissal of Mr Chubais is less of a disaster than it might seem. He has been an unusually successful

minister — so much so that most of Russia's retail trade is now in private hands, and even the transfer from state control of arthritic heavy industries is now limping forward. No one has yet shown any will to reinstitute the command economy; even the Communists are not calling for a return to classic communism. However, almost all Russians are exasperated by the way state concerns are being replaced with private monopolies controlled by criminals, mafia interests and the former nomenclature: a change of responsibility for reform may be the best way of preserving the main body of the reforms themselves.

What matters now is the smack of firm government, however irrelevant to the real demands of growth and reform. For the hammer-blows are coming not only from the clamorous Duma, but from the crash of rockets and the mounting death toll in Chechnia. The hijacking of the Turkish ferry and the inevitable broadening of this bitter feud into an international incident increases the pressure on the Russian leader to show himself unbending and implacable. For this reason also, the new Foreign Minister is talking a language that the West has not heard for years — crude nationalism that is seeking to rebuild old alliances with enemies of the West: Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the mullahs in Iran. Mr Yeltsin, in a desperate attempt to keep ahead of the disasters rolling over his Government, is seeking shelter in old attitudes and old policies. The West must soon ask whether it should still offer such visible support for a man floundering in such contradictions.

PUBLIC COMPANIES

The City should be cautious when deciding Granada or Forte

In the days since our last comment on the Granada/Forte corporate soap opera, its progress has strengthened its hold on viewers. Gerry Robinson, the chief of the Coronation Street maker Granada, has raised his bid for the Forte hotel empire from £3.3 billion to £3.8 billion. Sir Rocco Forte has split the role of chairman and chief executive. New characters have appeared, the latest being John Hoerner, best known for picking up and dusting down what Sir Ralph Halpern left behind at Burton Group. The saviour of Burton is backing Sir Rocco and has agreed to join the board as a non-executive director.

In the City, where the serious action takes place, Granada's stockbrokers have spent almost £400 million acquiring, with some difficulty, 9.9 per cent of Forte's equity. The founding Forte family still control some 8 per cent of the shares. New and influential brokers' circulars yesterday favoured the old management being given another chance. Everything is to play for come next Tuesday's 1pm deadline.

One source of City nervousness is the role of Mercury Asset Management, the pension fund specialist that is the main shareholder in both Granada and Forte. Mr Robinson would hardly have begun his hostile tilt without sounding out his company's principal owners. What fascinates the City cognoscenti is to what extent MAM may have encouraged Granada in its controversial bid for Forte and what MAM's own clients may think about their pension funds being used in this way: if Forte could be a target, what about them, they may think.

Mr Robinson's method of getting to his favoured parts of Forte represents an asset-stripping exercise that would not have disgraced the greatest days of that art. The conglomerate that Mr Robinson is determined to build will start life with some £4 billion of borrowings. In order to shrink this debt burden to more acceptable levels, Granada will then embark on some £2

billion of asset sales at prices unlikely to be enhanced by the visibility of the plan. The price is no longer cheap; the decision for all shareholders will be close. The City will make big profits from the fees of all these transactions. But what still worries viewers outside the City is that such highly-leveraged bidders, a breed which they thought went out after the excesses of the Eighties, are still at large and active.

The voices of this criticism are more popular than political, more likely to be found among customers and small shareholders than in Government or Opposition. The Labour party was unlikely to rush to the defence of an empire that was so staunch a supporter of Margaret Thatcher: the Tories could hardly campaign for so generous a friend. The saga has not, however, gone unnoticed on the Opposition benches — and the City, with an eye on the next election, should take note. Labour has long toyed with strengthening the roles of the Office of Fair Trading, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It sees debt mountains as only rarely auguring well for consumers or employees.

Sir Rocco Forte and Mr Robinson are now delivering their final presentations to City institutions, pension funds and insurance companies. These bodies traditionally cast their votes at the last minute. It is also a tradition that the institutions' vote is kept secret, unless the financial house chooses to stand up and be counted. Perhaps this latest battle will mark the beginning of the end for such anonymity. Will pension-holders at last decide to ask what their fund is doing with their money? The public has no reason to encourage highly leveraged asset-stripping exercises and a host of reasons to oppose them. Fund managers should bear in mind on Tuesday that they are entrusted with the public's savings, the public confidence in the City and a good deal else of public interest besides.

SEIZE THE TIME

MPs must keep the Butterfill Bill alive

Governments whose parliamentary majority has dwindled to almost nothing over a long period in power lose their nerve easily. The present Cabinet's feebleness in the face of trouble or pressure has rarely been as plain as in the miserable saga of the Private Member's Bill on daylight saving which returns to the House of Commons on Friday. No sooner had the Scottish Secretary, Mr Michael Forsyth, threatened ministers with predictions of electoral damage north of the border, than Mr Major's cringing colleagues caved in and refused to back the measure.

Mr John Butterfill's Bill to create an extra hour of afternoon daylight and to bring Britain in line with continental European time will die without government help. The only question remaining is how soon Mr Forsyth succeeds in killing it. The Bill will only have a chance of a second reading and a few more months of life if at least hundred MPs take part in a vote to keep it alive tomorrow.

The Bill, even if doomed by the Cabinet's weakness, deserves longer in the public eye: MPs should take the trouble to turn up. Changing the clocks has already been a long haul and will take more time yet. A few months more of debate will keep the issue alive. Altering the nation's clocks does not belong with what President Bush called the "vision thing". Mr Butterfill's Bill is a commonsense thing. Research suggests that between 100 and 200 deaths on the roads might be saved across the whole of Britain each year by delaying the start of darkness. Crime rates should fall. Old peoples' lives

should be lightened. Sport, tourism and trans-European businesses would all gain.

The Government has made no attempt to dispute the mountain of evidence which has now been gathered — much of it by Whitehall agencies — in favour of daylight saving. Mr Forsyth musters no statistics but merely blusters that changing the clocks would be "deeply damaging in Scotland". His colleagues have meekly accepted that the rhythm of their day and night should be governed by the truculent Scots. Members of the Government have been instructed to abstain on Friday and the whips have put out the word that support for Mr Butterfill would be ill-regarded. Scottish ministers will be allowed to vote against the Bill.

The strength of feeling in Scotland is not in dispute; the question is whether emotion north of the border should settle the question. The greatest good of the greatest number is being sacrificed to save the seats of Mr Forsyth and a handful of his colleagues. The Scottish Secretary should bear in mind the words of Edmund Burke: "Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole." The best rebuke that MPs of all parties can deliver to the Government's limp cowardice is a large enough presence in the House on Friday morning to prolong the debate. This Bill may not succeed, but one day the change will be made. Time is on the side of sense.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Prison cuts as threat to education, humanity and safety

From Lady Andrew, Chairman, Prisoners' Education Trust

Sir, I regret that in speaking out against the swinging cuts in prison expenditure which are planned for the next financial year (report, January 15) most commentators have emphasised the impact on security and risk to the public. This serves to inflame public fears and reflects the language now common in discussions of crime and penal policy.

Security is an important consideration. It is, however, obscuring other vital matters which the Prison Service should bear in mind, such as rehabilitation and the reduction of recidivism. In this context, the education of offenders should surely have some priority.

The National Prison Survey, 1991, showed that 43 per cent of offenders have no qualifications and that over 80 per cent left school by 16. A survey of over 600 prisoners in 1995 found that 58 per cent had no chance to improve their educational qualifications while in prison. It has been calculated that almost half of prisoners have low levels of literacy and even more have difficulties with numeracy.

Education gives them something constructive to do during their sentences, a training in the discipline of study and a boost to their self-confidence. It can lead to gaining qualifications, without which it is almost impossible to find work on release. The Prison Service Rule 29 begins: "Every prisoner able to profit from the educational facilities provided at a prison shall be encouraged to do so."

We in the Prisoners' Education Trust see that there is a steady demand for education which is too often thwarted. I am at a loss to understand the logic of forcing governors to make cuts in education

departments. In one London prison, teaching hours will be reduced from over 9,000 to about 3,500 in a year.

Education can provide a cost-effective means of attacking the cycle of re-offending. The present proposals are likely to lead to anger and frustration among prisoners and education staff, tensions and difficulties for other prison staff and the possibility of money wasted on the control of unrest and riot. Is this what we want?

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH ANDREW,
Chairman,
Prisoners' Education Trust,
Fleet House,
173 Haydon Road, SW19,
January 15.

From the General Secretary of the Association of Chief Officers of Probation

Sir, I am increasingly convinced that the mission statement for the Prison Service that reads, "Our duty is to look after [prisoners] with humanity and help them lead law-abiding and useful lives in custody after release" could now, reasonably, be dropped.

Is the Home Office interested in helping prisoners when it erodes education and marginalises employment and training opportunities in favour of security, or slashes purposeful home visits, or increases the likelihood of homelessness by removing housing-benefit entitlement?

The answers are clearly "no". Rehabilitation has slipped from the agenda.

Pictures of chained-up pregnant women, or the fact that women may have to provide, before others, urine samples for random drug-testing, graphically show that humanity is fast disappearing from prisons. The probation service has always

worked within prisons and with released prisoners in the belief that by assisting in the transition from captivity to freedom we were contributing to a process endorsed by those at the top. If our work is further undermined by the imminent cuts we will have confirmation that this is no longer the case.

Yours faithfully,
MARY HONEYBALL,
General Secretary,
Association of Chief Officers of Probation,
212 Whitechapel Road, E1.

From Mr John Harding

Sir, The cuts which have just been announced will make prison conditions even less conducive to good order and effective rehabilitation.

In the six London prisons alone they could lead to the withdrawal of about 25 probation officers from a complement of 59. These staff are involved in assessing the risk posed by individual prisoners and preparing them for release on supervision. Failure to invest adequately in this work will threaten public safety and worsen their chances of resettlement.

In our discussions with them, prison governors have been well aware of these consequences but are faced with unenviable choices between unacceptable alternatives. The notion that "prison works" is dubious. It is likely to be devalued even further by stripping away those opportunities that exist to increase prisoners' skills and change their behaviour.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN HARDING
(Chief Probation Officer),
Inner London Probation Service,
71/73 Great Peter Street, SW1,
January 16.

Bishops' moves on the cards

From the Reverend Father Francis A. C. S. Bown

Sir, The problem with bishops' palaces (report, January 11) is not the palaces but the bishops.

So many of the present bench are either angst-ridden liberals or puffed evangelicals that it is not surprising that they fail to use their palaces properly.

The episcopal palace should be the social centre of the diocese, where the bishop entertains his clergy and offers them sustenance and support. Too often, however, the grand surroundings witness the comings and goings only of clerical bureaucrats and the grandees of local business and politics. Ordinary clergy (unless in trouble) are kept well away.

It is, of course, entirely consistent with the Church of England's record of financial acumen that it should be thinking of selling off its palatial assets at the bottom of the property market. (It did the same thing in the 1960s with its best rectories and vicarages.)

The established Church does not need new, small-scale bishops' houses: it needs some bishops of real stature and vision to fill the historic palaces it has inherited.

Yours, in Domino,
FRANCIS BOWN,
St Stephen's Presbytery,
29 Westbourne Avenue,
Kingston-upon-Hull, Yorkshire,
January 11.

From Mr Anuram F. Evans

Sir, The Bishop of Worcester uses his residence, Hartlebury Castle, for diocesan purposes: for example, interviews for clergy (and their wives) who have applied to be presented to a living. At one such meeting, held in 1989, the 19 people attending, including the archdeacon, six wardens and myself, were involved in five separate confidential discussions. Such meetings are by no means uncommon.

Another use may be a meeting with an overseas Christian leader. On all such occasions, an important and indeed, for Christians, a very useful facility is the chapel, steeped in history: I believe that the bishop and his visitors use it on a daily basis. I have certainly prayed there several times.

The Church Commissioners must not be allowed to sell Hartlebury Castle without first consulting the parishes of the diocese directly, and secondly without making serious endeavour to recover a large part of the gigantic deficit for which they are responsible.

Domestically, the house is relatively inconvenient. I have no doubt that the bishop and his wife live there out of duty rather than choice.

Yours sincerely,
ANURAM F. EVANS
(Lay patron of the United Benefice of Clifton-on-Teme, Lower Sapey and the Shelsleys),
Hartlebury House,
Clifton-on-Teme, Worcestershire,
January 11.

From Mrs Sarah Griffiths

Sir, According to the chaplain to the new Bishop of Portsmouth bishops are being evicted from their large houses to ones "which will suit the needs of a bishop in the 21st century". Will small congregations in large churches also be asked to move?

Yours faithfully,
SARAH GRIFFITHS,
The Birches,
Vowchurch Common, Herefordshire,
January 11.

A fish called zander

From Mr Richard Morgan

Sir, I must take issue with your leading article (January 10) describing the zander as "the scaly foreign fish".

As you point out in a report on the same day, zander were originally late 19th-century immigrants from Eastern Europe and first lived in three communities in the Woburn Abbey area.

Eighty years and many generations later their descendants became sufficiently anglicised to move into more mainstream English society via the Great Ouse.

Their success must surely recommend them as good citizens — in spite of their somewhat violent nature — and able to move in both aristocratic and more down-to-earth circles.

Yours faithfully,
R. MORGAN,
105 Leopold Street,
Loughborough, Leicestershire,
January 11.

Fair play

From the Reverend Dr P. J. Galloway

Sir, Instead of the politically correct but impossibly confusing bi-coloured chess pieces proposed by Mr Michael Parker (letter, January 16), why not move through the looking-glass and take a leaf from the far from non-sensical world of Alice: replace the conflict between black and white by the tetchy, but essentially good-natured, relations between white and red.

Yours sincerely,
PETER GALLOWAY,
The Vicarage,
Lyncroft Gardens, NW6,
January 11.

Risk to game shooting

From Mr Leolin Price, QC

Sir, When the Brussels Commission made the regulation banning the use of the drug Erythrone for game birds (report, January 13) had it ascertained that this would put at risk game shooting business in this country worth £294 million annually and 13,000 jobs? If not, why should the Commissioner and officers responsible for this irresponsible attack upon this country continue in their present employment?

When our Ministry of Agriculture became aware of the proposal, what did they do about it? And did the Ministry's officers assess the damaging effect on our economy and employment? If nothing was done, and particularly if no such assessment was made, why should those officers continue in our employment?

You report that our Government "failed to block" the proposal last summer. Was that failure at bureaucratic or at ministerial level? Nothing should have stopped our Government from exercising power to protect our interest.

Yours truly,
LEOLIN PRICE,
10 Old Square,
Lincoln's Inn, WC2,
January 13.

From Ms Leonora Digby Smith

Sir, Now that the Government is to defy Brussels over the new EU regulation to ban the drug Erythrone used by game bird breeders, what is their new excuse for not banning the export of live animals for slaughter?

Yours faithfully,
LEONORA DIGBY SMITH,
4a Sharpleshall Street,
Primrose Hill, NW1,
January 16.

Own goal?

From Mr H. W. Lander

Sir, William Rees-Mogg may be forgiven for not knowing that Terry Venables is renowned in footballing circles as the first player to represent England at all age levels ("This is a whole new ball game for me", January 15), but he certainly should have been aware that the usurper who overthrew Richard II was Henry IV (Bolingbroke), not Henry V.

Yours faithfully,
H. W. LANDER,
24 Pochin Drive,
Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

Sports letters, page 45

Share sales

From Mr Christopher Rouse

Sir, I have today sold 500 Forte shares in the market at 306p per share, 4p per share higher than the "final" cash offer from Granada.

Surely it is wrong that the tax treatment of institutions and pension funds enables them to pay me this 4p per share premium in what is supposedly a free and orderly market.

Yours sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER ROUSE,
Flat One, 9 Coleherne Road, SW10,
January 15.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

Studying chronic fatigue syndrome

From Mr Hugh Faulkner

Sir, Dr Simon Wessely ("ME: is this the answer?", January 9) highlights the need for urgent scientific research of a high calibre if we are to overcome ME, or chronic fatigue syndrome.

To stimulate research the Persistent Virus Disease Research Foundation was launched in 1993 by a group of distinguished scientists and doctors pre-eminent in the field. The public response has been such that already the foundation is funding four major research projects and is making a financial contribution to a fifth.

The scientists are covering a wide field of research, examining the role of viruses and the effect of persisting virus infection on muscle and evaluating the effect of virus infection on chemicals in the brain.

We realise that this is only a start in unravelling the mysteries of this highly complex disease. With the dedication of doctors and scientists and continuing public support we are confident that this disease can and will be conquered.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH FAULKNER
(Honorary Director),
Persistent Virus Disease Research Foundation,
4 One Tree Lane,
Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire,
January 13.

Daylight Bill

From Mr Nick Raynsford, MP for Greenwich (Labour)

Sir, Sir Michael Angus and his co-signatories (letter, January 17) offer a series of estimates of the supposed benefits of changing our clocks from Greenwich Mean Time to Central European Time. These are of course all speculative.

When the same exercise was tried experimentally in the late 1960s and early 1970s the practical experience was very different. The then Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, commenting on the road traffic accident figures, pointed out that there had been a small increase in road casualties, not a reduction.

He added: "The figures are not clear enough to base a decision on. I think that we should assume one way or the other that there is not a large margin either way."

There is one simple and fundamental reason why we should retain Greenwich Mean Time. Geographi-

cally Britain lies at the western edge of the European continent and its natural time zone is one hour behind that of the Central European axis lying between Berlin and Rome.

No amount of special pleading by the proponents of change can overcome this simple truth.

Yours sincerely,
NICK RAYNSFORD,
House of Commons,
January 17.

From Mr Peter Petts

Sir, With due respect to Sir Michael Angus et al. who are probably chauffeur-driven to their offices for 10am, my pickers and packers (some of them on bicycles) come to work at 8am. At present it is not daylight until 8am. If the proposed changes are effected, next year it will not be light until nine.

Yours faithfully,
PETER PETTS
(Chief Executive),
The Herbarium,
Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire.

and told that he would have to use "the normal toilet facilities at the far end of the station".

Clearly Eurostar to Paris is quite a different experience from Eurostar from Paris.

Yours sincerely,
ANTHONY FIELD,
152 Cromwell Tower, Barbican, EC2.

From Mrs Elodie Stanley

Sir, Less than 20 minutes out of the Gare du Nord en route to Waterloo on Sunday, I decided to visit the buffet car, with the inevitable *l'été fée* of a train well provisioned in Paris. There I found a modest queue but, when I reached its head, no food (unless you count the last tuna sandwich and the only remaining cheeseburger).

Eurostar or Eurostarve?

Yours faithfully,
ELODIE STANLEY,
12 Stanley Crescent, W11,
January 15.

When I pointed out that we were able to use similar facilities at Waterloo I was told: "Well, London is London and Paris is Paris." A disabled colleague was denied use of the toilet

Costa del Sol still shines

BRITISH holidaymakers still outnumber all others in the Costa del Sol. Last year 1.1 million arrived at Malaga airport — 36 per cent of the total number of arrivals. The Spanish themselves totalled 824,599, the Germans 284,542 and the French a mere 160,859, says the Costa del Sol tourist board.

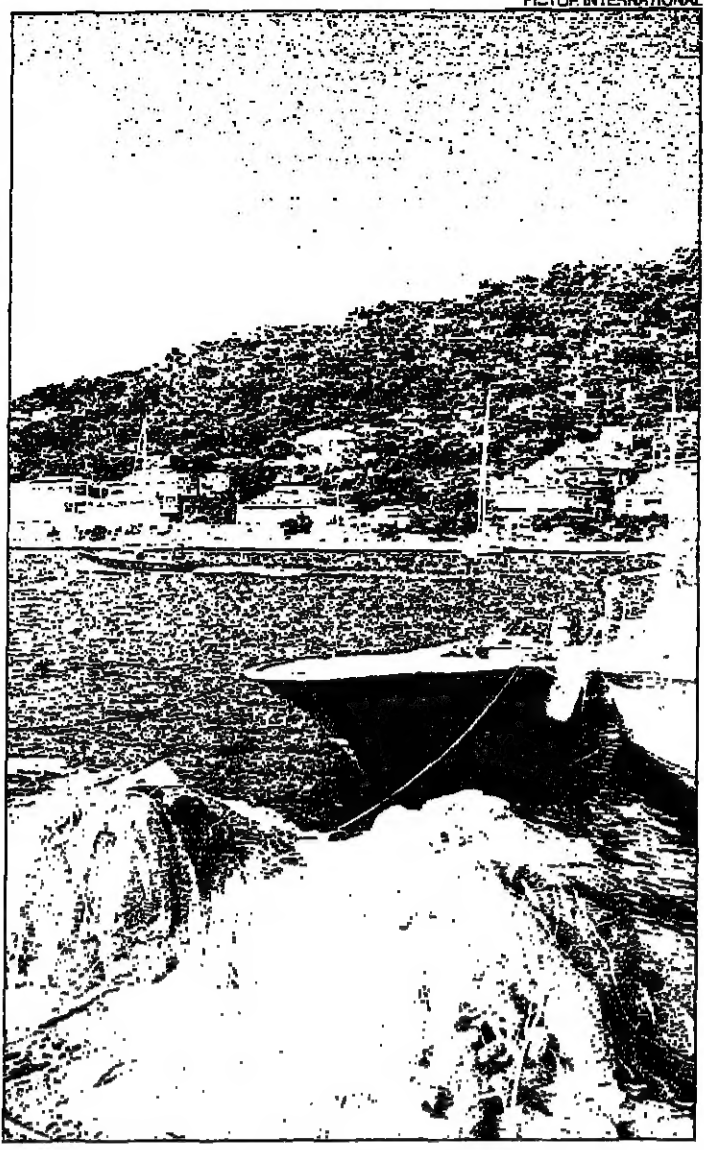
Word of the attractions of the Costa del Sol is spreading throughout the former Eastern bloc. In 1994 there were no Russian visitors but last year 26,624 arrived at Malaga airport.

Venice rocks

ST MARK'S Square in Venice is being taken over on February 17 and 18 for a free festival of electric and acoustic "world music" likely to attract 100,000 people. World of Music, Arts and Dance — will stage the show, which will feature performances by the Paris-based Papa Wemba and other musicians from four continents.

Wanderlust

WHITBREAD the brewery is investing £25,000 in the Heineken travel bursary to encourage young people to fulfil their thirst for adventure. The bursary will be available to anyone aged between 18 and 35 who convinces the company that they are genuine in their urge to travel and who want to fulfil their "wildest dreams". Heineken says that last year 182,000 young Britons went to the Far East and 305,000 to Australia.



Most of Anguilla's popular haunts were destroyed by Hurricane Luis

Hurricane clean-up

FROM ANTHONY HOLDEN IN ANGUILLA

THE PHONE was still out of order, and a mid-afternoon shower had turned the car park into a quagmire. But the food was spot-on, and fine wines flowed like rum punch last Saturday night as 40 people turned out for the reopening of Mango's, one of Anguilla's most popular beachside restaurants.

To David Schmittlich of New Jersey, long a regular visitor to this small but most select of Caribbean islands, Mango's was simply "my favourite restaurant in the whole world". So last June he sold up his East Coast bagel chain and bought the place, in partnership with his wife, Carol, and a chef from one of Anguilla's luxury hotels.

As the Schmittlichs moved their worldly goods south to the sun, he closed Mango's for a three-month overhaul — only to watch dumbstruck on September 5, a week short of his grand reopening, as Hurricane Luis swept in and blew all his dreams away.

"Next morning," he says, "I sat on the beach and wept for an hour." All that remained of his elegant, ocean-lapped restaurant were a few chunks of twisted concrete, tossed around like children's building blocks by Luis.

Mango's second coming could not have happened unless the seasoned Schmittlichs, unlike many of Anguilla's smaller-scale entrepreneurs, had taken out insurance. The azure coastline of this British crown colony holds many tales

with less happy endings. In the eye of the storm for 14 hours, Anguillians awoke to find their island had been "brownd" — deprived of its lush greenery and robbed of many of the pleasure domes beloved of its well-heeled holiday clientele — on the brink of the winter season.

Not merely had roofs been blown off, walls demolished, floors undermined and furniture waterlogged, but whole beaches had disappeared, depriving some of the West Indies' finest resorts of their raison d'être. At the luxury Cap Juluca this week, a dredger is rebuilding the mile-long beach along Maunday's Bay before the planned reopening next month of the hotel's 70 ritzy rooms.

On Barnes Bay the once-famous Cocoloba stands empty and devastated, a *Mary Celeste* among swank hotels, its pool full of rotting debris, its palatial halls as ravaged and windswept as the ghostly Xanadu at the end of Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*.

Among other hotels familiar to British holidaymakers from the brochures of such firms as Caribbean Connection, the exotic Casa Blanca on Rendezvous Bay (where the Queen stayed in 1994) also stands empty, pending its imminent reopening under new American management as the Sonesta Beach Resort. Over at Cinnamon Reef in Little Harbour, however, it is business as usual after a heroic recovery from extensive damage —

chronicled in one of the before-and-after picture albums now found all over Anguilla.

Another survivor is the exclusive Shoal Bay West villa complex of Cove Castles, haunt of movie stars and other celebrities, much of whose beach has gone west — ending up outside the (destroyed and rebuilt) Paradise Café. "We're not too bothered," Norman Luxembourg, the manager, says. "Mother Nature will bring it back by June."

Above it all — literally as well as metaphorically, atop its stately Meads Bay bluff — rose the legendary Malliouhana, whose founder-owner Leon Roydon scarcely blinked when Luis made off with the wooden roof of his ocean-view restaurant and pillaged his lavish gardens. Closed in September, as luck would have it, Mr Roydon didn't hang around for insurance assessors before replacing the roof and repainting the walls, importing 20 container-loads of palm trees from Florida, and welcoming his October guests as if nothing much had happened.

Built to withstand 160mph winds and the strongest earthquakes, the Malliouhana, widely regarded as the Caribbean's finest hotel, is the only resort on the island now functioning at capacity. Amid the wreckage Luis left behind were Anguilla's 1995-96 tourist figures. "But we are bouncing back," Mr Roydon, also a member of the island's tourist board, says. "Anguillians are very resilient."

Scotland is tops with US tourists

BY STEVE KEENAN

NORTH Americans discovering Britain by rail are choosing Scotland ahead of more traditional tourist areas. Four Scottish cities appear in the Top 20 cities, with Edinburgh second only to London and ahead of York.

Inverness also outstrips Bath and Chester, while Glasgow and Aberdeen have more appeal than Windermere in the Lake District, Cambridge and Stratford-upon-Avon do not appear at all.

The figures come from British Rail International, which has sold £20 million-worth of rail passes to American and Canadian tourists in the past year, worth on average £150 for a week's travel.

"The Americans love the trains because they don't really use them at home. But Britain has a highly developed network and Scotland is a big attraction to them," Ross Furby, managing director of BR International, says.

"If they buy a BR pass, people decide on average to go to three or four cities in the UK. Rail passes are a big growth area for us and sales are going up. We are pushing hard in the US."

BR International's Top 10 towns and cities for North American tourists are: 1. London; 2. Edinburgh; 3. York; 4. Inverness; 5. Bath; 6. Chester; 7. Oxford; 8. Glasgow; 9. Aberdeen; 10. Windermere.

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Hotels that take the sauce

BALIFFSCOURT Hotel in West Sussex prides itself on its ability to pamper guests, especially over a weekend when they can sleep in four-poster beds, read the Sunday papers in front of log fires in their own large bedroom-cum-sitting room and walk along the windswept pebble beach at Climping near Bognor Regis.

Last weekend I enjoyed just such a break in the "medieval" hotel (it was built from 13th, 14th and 15th-century timbers, stone and glass culled from places the current owners still blush to think about).

But like so many other good hotels with aspirations, Baliffscourt betrays that lack of class which ultimately separates the good from the great by its attitude to sauce. Brown sauce. Preferably HP.

I had ordered poached eggs on toast for breakfast. And, sure enough, they came perfectly cooked, on crisp toast, served with hot, well-brewed tea. But when I asked for what I consider an essential part of such a meal — HP sauce — I got a look approaching that drawn on waiters' faces by



The Travel Business HARVEY ELLIOTT

H.M. Bateman in his "The man who... cartoons."

"We don't," I was told tartly, "have brown sauce of any sort here, Sir."

Now I have eaten breakfasts brought to their full glory by brown sauce in some of the best hotels in Britain and its former colonies around the world. The very best hotels bring it in the bottle. Those that are still trying to make the grade serve it coyly in little pots with a spoon, lest other guests are offended. Then come hotels such as Baliffscourt which, although otherwise good, convince themselves that brown sauce is eaten only by the people who really have no place in their establishment.

At the very bottom of the heap, of course, come those that serve sauce in appalling plastic sachets which have to be ripped open with your teeth.

And though the attitude towards HP sauce lies, in my view, at the very heart of hotel snobbery, there are any number of other afflictions that indicate a hotel's real standing. Collecting shoes from outside a guest's door, for example, is naïf. Removing them from the room without asking and quietly returning them later is class.

TEA-MAKING equipment which is prominently displayed with little packets of tea and coffee and UHT milk in tiny cartons is appalling. A kettle sited discreetly out of sight but with jars of coffee and good tea are — most important of all — fresh milk in a fridge or mini-bar is style, especially if the hotel makes it plain that there are also staff who will happily bring you tea or coffee at any time of the day or night.

Radios built into the bedside cabinet that never seem to work properly but which, you are told, are the only means of obtaining a wake-up call, are a clear indication that the hotel has a long way to go.

But then we all have our own prejudices and snobberies. My weekend really was relaxing and I enjoyed so many aspects of Baliffscourt. It would have been perfect had I been able to get my HP sauce.

Holiday bookings slump

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT

AS HOLIDAYMAKERS continue to shun summer packages and bookings stubbornly remain about 25 per cent below last year's levels, official figures have revealed the full extent of the sales slump within the travel industry.

The leading five tour operators have reduced the number of holidays they have applied for licences to sell this year by 17.3 per cent, 11.5 per cent fewer than they sold last summer.

The top five together accounted for more than 60 per cent of all the airline seats and holidays officially licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) last summer.

"Tour operators are prepared to sell fewer holidays at profitable prices rather than be left with holidays that have to be sold at uneconomic prices in the late booking market," says Helen Simpson, head of licensing and finance at the CAA.

The average price of a foreign package holiday increased from £366 in 1994 to £361 last year, says the CAA, and the number of holiday-makers flying from Britain rose by about 7 per cent in 1995. But the figures fail to show the sudden drop in sales which led to widespread discounting during the year.

"There was a increase in passenger numbers but prices were clearly under pressure — there was a fall in average real terms despite the fact that tour operators had to bear higher costs and taxes than in the summer of 1994," Mrs Simpson says.

The industry had hoped that

bookings would have begun to increase by mid-January, but there is little sign of an upturn and they remain about 25 per cent down on the same time last year. The worst hit destination is Greece, with bookings down 40 per cent on 1995.

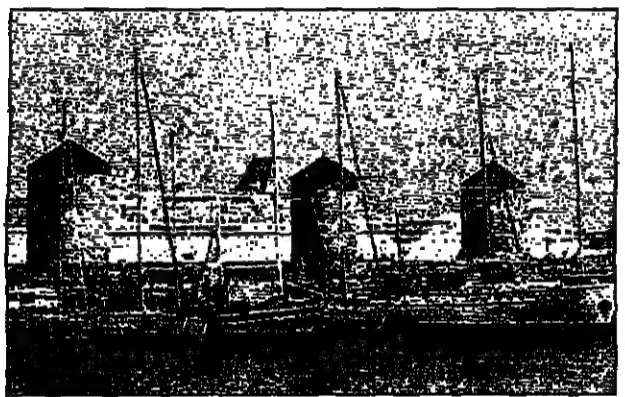
Tony Bennett, managing director of Going Places, Britain's second largest retail travel agency, forecasts that total package holiday bookings will still be 15-20 per cent down by the end of January. Even to achieve this gloomy result, the trade will need to see a sharp improvement during the next fortnight.

However, Fiona Stewart, of the Henley Centre for Forecasting, told members of the Tourism Society this week that there was no evidence of diminished desire by Britons to take a holiday.

She blamed a combination of two developments for "trickling" consumer confidence: the retreat of the "manny state" and the prevalence of temporary employment contracts.

"When things look bleak, when we have to take greater responsibility for our own welfare, every now and then people say, 'let's forget it all and have a good time'. They are not prepared to make long-term commitments but at some stage they are going to say, 'I've had enough, let's go and have a holiday'."

Mr Bennett told the same meeting: "There are people out there who are not yet convinced that they are getting the best deal or that there is going to be a shortage of holidays."



Open Rhodes: bookings to Greece are down 40 per cent



Johanne Masheder: her body was found in a cave after she failed to return home

Backpack safety drive

By TONY DAWE AND CAROL MIDGLEY

TRAVEL companies which specialise in backpacking holidays are busy trying to reassure young people — and their parents — that, with a few precautions, these trips are safe, inspiring and rewarding.

The murder of Johanne Masheder, whose body was found in Thailand last weekend at the end of a three-month trip, has shocked the industry and worried parents of those planning similar journeys.

Her death is the latest in the list of killings and kidnappings of young British travellers in India, Africa and South East Asia in recent years. Miss Masheder, 23, a law graduate who was about to start work with a firm of

them to take extra care. They should check the leaflets prepared for young, independent travellers, read the guide books, especially for areas where recent disturbances have occurred and check with the Foreign Office.

STA, which handles 350,000 young travellers a year, has prepared leaflets entitled *Travel Inbetween* and *Traveling Solo* to offer guidance on planning a trip and avoiding trouble. "We also run a help desk for travellers to call should they lose their passport, get mugged or have a nervous breakdown," says Miss Smith.

Jennifer Cox, spokeswoman for *Lonely Planet* guide books, says Thailand is one of the safest places to travel

alone because the country is geared to backpackers. She advises travellers, however, to leave an itinerary of their journey with relatives, so their course can be tracked if they go missing, and to ring home at least once a week. "Being safe while you are travelling comes down to how to carry yourself," she says. "If you give the impression of knowing what you're doing, people won't take advantage."

Few travel experts believe that the horror of Miss Masheder's death or other recent tragedies will deter backpackers, eager for adventure in exotic places. Sophie Brown, a final year student from Manchester, remains determined to backpack through Asia. "My parents are trying to persuade me to go with them to Greece instead," she says, "but I have told them I want to cut loose before I get bogged down in a job."

STA Travel leaflets from 0171-937 1221: Foreign Office travel advice line: 0171-270 4129/4179

WHEN TRAVELLING SOLO

- ☐ Don't arrive alone at airports or train stations late at night
- ☐ Don't wear revealing clothes
- ☐ Don't drink alcohol alone in public
- ☐ Don't hitch-hike
- ☐ Don't draw attention to your cash or openly change large amounts
- ☐ Don't pore over maps on the street

Bargains to France

By STEVE KEENAN

FRANCE is hoping to win late bookings this year by cashing in on the slump in traditional Mediterranean holidays.

Britain's biggest five operators have already responded to poor demand by axing 1.4 million holidays for summer 1996, and more reductions are expected, so consumers may not find the usual flood of late bargains. With a ferry price war expected this summer, the French Tourist Office believes many families may make a late decision to opt for a holiday across the Channel instead.

"There are bound to be deals to France this year," says Dennis Fabri, FTO marketing director. "The battle among the ferry companies will continue — they won't hold their nerve this year." France is failing, along with other major summer destinations, to attract early bookings, with the result that special offers

are already appearing, some as a result of the ferry war. Drive France is cutting £50 off holidays, including a F&O European Ferries crossing to Cherbourg or Le Havre, while those booking a holiday with a Brittany Ferries day crossing will receive a free cabin; both to be booked by February 5.

French Country Camping is adding two free nights to two-week holidays and giving away £10 meal vouchers on Stena Line for bookings by January 31. While Keycamp last month cut July and August prices by 5 per cent, and has now launched a series of "under £100 per person holidays", with prices from £30 per person for five nights camping in Picardy and Normandy.

"Operators are getting no business but they need the money in to pay salaries, if nothing else," says M. Fabri. The FTO is pushing its message that, despite the strong franc, France is cheap to reach and is good value for self-catering families.

Its argument was given a boost this week by Sunsites, the camping company, which has surveyed the cost of 15 items bought at Tesco in Northwich, Cheshire, with the equivalent bought at Carrefour in Calais. The British shopping basket cost £19.28, compared with £14.10 in Calais.

	Carrefour	Tesco
Baguette	0.25	0.57
Tomatoes (2)	0.25	0.30
Lemonade (10)	0.25	0.52
French fries	(12) 1.80	(6) 1.39
Milk (1)	0.57	0.57
Orange juice (10)	0.67	0.69
Apples (2)	0.19	0.37
Red wine	2.59	2.59
Bottled beer	(10) 1.80	(6) 2.89
Butter	0.94	0.78
Camembert	1.02	1.79
Eggs (6)	0.22	0.22
Potatoes	0.18	0.30
Pickles	0.88	0.88
Cheese (10)	0.41	0.41
TOTAL	£14.10	£19.28

Note: all prices given in sterling; exchange rate £1 = F17.38

Luxury Bali hotel finishes £14m refit

FROM BILL FROST IN BALI

THE Nusa Dua Beach hotel, on the Indonesian island of Bali, owned by the Sultan of Brunei and considered by many to be the most opulent in the Pacific, this week completed a £14.5 million facelift.

The hotel remained open during the redevelopment although Kevin O'Hagan, the general manager, admits that perhaps it should have closed. "Some people were upset with us," he says.

But even the most curmudgeonly visitor would be hard-pressed to fault the new elegance and comfort of the 380 guest rooms and suites.

A new "palace" wing offers extreme opulence and absolute privacy. It is to this wing, with its liveried butler service, that Mr O'Hagan hopes to attract some big names. Former guests include Ronald Reagan, Helmut Kohl and King Hussein.

Having once suffered from a scarcity of luxury accommodation, this corner of the

island now has a glut. And the Nusa Dua Beach Hotel has a fight on its hands. Mr O'Hagan says: "We have to offer something different from everybody else. We have a new spa with health and beauty treatments and conference centre facilities. We are all competing fiercely now."

WEEKEND TRAVEL

Travel the world again in Weekend on Saturday

Family holidays in France, Denmark, Italy and Turkey

Scotland; Burns country

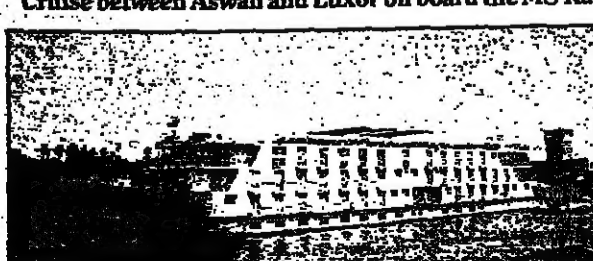
Skiing: John Samuel in Squaw Valley and Doug Sager on ski insurance

A Special Announcement A Week on the Nile - 7 nights from £395

Travellers are flocking back to Egypt but prices have not yet caught up with demand. Earlier this year we secured some extraordinarily low prices for a superior product and we can therefore continue to offer cruises on the first-class MS Ra Nile cruiser. The tour represents excellent value for money since the tariff includes all meals, transfers, guides and excursions.

The journey commences with a direct flight from Gatwick to Aswan to join the MS Ra. Our week-long cruise will include visits to the Temple of Edfu, Esna, the Temple of Karnak, the Valley of the Kings, the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, Luxor, Kom Ombo, and the Aswan High Dam.

Cruise between Aswan and Luxor on board the MS Ra



pool, jacuzzi. All cabins are air conditioned and have private bathrooms. For a true escape with that magical combination of culture and relaxation this is surely an opportunity that should not be missed.

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

1996 Mondays - per person in twin February 5, £3,635

December 16, £395
December 23, £3,645
Single cabin £150
Middle deck £45
Upper deck £95
Abu Simbel (by road) £69

Price includes: air travel, transfers, 7 nights on the Ra, full board, excursions, entrance fees, hotel representation, not included: insurance, visa (can be obtained by the Company), airport taxes, VAT.

All prices are subject to change.

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TAP AIR PORTUGAL

2 adults must travel together and stay Saturday night Group A car hire Offer subject to availability

BARGAINS OF THE WEEK

UNTIL the end of March.

children's car holiday in California for £99 on a special Air Travel Advisory Bureau offer. Accompanying adults will pay £563 for return BA flights, seven nights at a hotel and a week's car hire. Details: 0171-636 5000.

EUROCAMPS has extended its early booking offer until January 31. Savings of £30 are available on tents and mobile homes at 280 sites with an extra £50 discount for holidays starting on August 22 or 23. Details: 01565 626262.

SKIING holidays for a week in France, Switzerland and Andorra, with departures from Gatwick on Sunday, are available at savings of £20 to £50 per person from

Top Deck. Details: 0171-370 4355.

A WEEK in a 2-star hotel in Limassol, Cyprus, leaving Gatwick next Wednesday is available for £170 per person from Sunworld. Details: 0113 255 5222.

CRYSTAL France is offering savings of £150 plus a free welcome hamper at selected villas until January 31. Details: 0181-390 3335.

TWO nights in Budapest during February and March at a 5-star hotel with return scheduled flights cost £299 per person with Moswin. Details: 0116 271 9922.

SAVE up to half the brochure price on some cruises by booking at Lunn Poly before January 31. Details: 01203 223300.

HOLIDAY Inn has extended its special

Weekender rates at 170 hotels in Europe, the Middle East and Africa to weekdays. Offers, which include £45 per room per night at the Glasgow Holiday Inn Garden Court with breakfast, are available until the end of February. Details: 0800 397121.

INTER-CONTINENTAL Hotel and Resorts has a "winter sale" of its Heart of the City breaks at 48 European hotels until January 31. A typical deal is £69 per room per night at the Hamburg hotel, available every day. Details: 0345 581444.

VISA cardholders can obtain discounts of up to 30 per cent off regular rates at 140 hotels throughout the world

that are members of the reservation company, Supra-National Hotels. Rates range from Prague to the Jura's Kensington in London. Reservations 0500 303030.

EGERTON House in Knightsbridge, a London town house hotel, has a rate of £160 for two per night instead of the usual £195 until the end of February. Details: 0171-589 2412.

THE Old Course hotel at St Andrews in Scotland has a special offer of £99 per person until the end of March for two nights' accommodation, full Scottish breakfast and use of the hotel's leisure spa facilities. Fees for the hotel's new golf course are extra. Details: 01334 474371.

AIR FRANCE has a bargain package to Paris until March 31. Each passenger (a minimum of two people must travel) pays £99, which includes return flights from London, two nights' accommodation including breakfast and free passes for public transport and museums. Details: 0181-742 6600.

BOOK seven days ahead, include a Saturday night away and Maersk Air will sell you a Gatwick-Copenhagen ticket for just £120. Details: 0171-333 0066.

AUSTRIAN Airlines has retimed its London-Vienna flights to leave from Heathrow at 6.35am and return at 7.45pm.

LE Shuttle has special daytrip and overnight fares for travel from Folkestone to Calais until March 31, but excluding February 15-25. Details: 0990 335335.

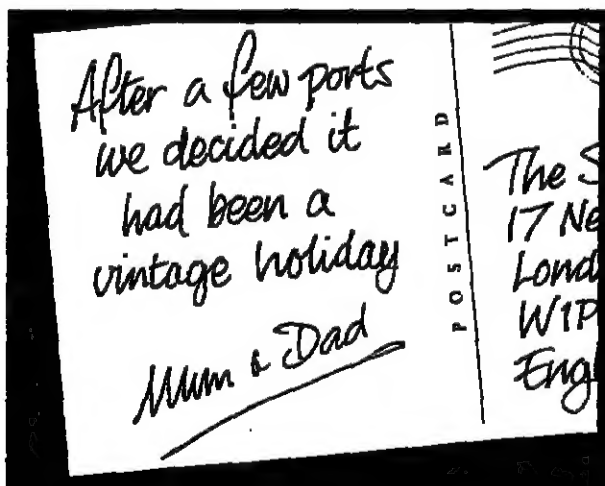
NORTH Sea Ferries has cut prices by up to 30 per

cent by no longer automatically including meals as part of fares. A peak season crossing from Hull to Zeebrugge or Rotterdam falls from £506 to £385 for an outside cabin for four people plus car, without meals.

DRIVELINE Europe has daytrip fares and 28-day returns (travel between 11pm-6am) with Le Shuttle from £39. Details: 01707 660011.

STENA Line is cutting 50 per cent off caravan fares on Southampton-Cherbourg and Dover-Calais throughout 1996, for bookings by January 31. The saving is up to £38. Details: 0990 707070.

IRISH Ferries has a long weekend offer (leave Friday and back on Tuesday) from Holyhead and Pembroke of £134 return until March 26. It also has a 48-hour return of £63. Bookings by January 31. Both fares are for a car and five passengers. Details: 0345 171717.



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NEWS

Queen refuses to bail out Duchess

The Queen is refusing to help the Duchess of York with her debts, which are more than £1 million, Buckingham Palace said yesterday.

The Duchess, whose spending far outpaces her income, must face her money responsibilities alone, according to the palace. Her overdraft, which is said to be with Coutts bank, could attract interest charges of £91,000 a year at a rate of 2.5 per cent over the base rate. Pages 1, 7, 15, 18

Tory MPs report plot to oust Major

A group of Tory grandees is privately plotting to oust John Major after the expected losses in the May council elections. Conservative MPs have told *The Times* that the group of the "great and the good" includes leading figures previously regarded as loyal to the Prime Minister. Page 1

Black Sea deal

The Turkish Government and the pro-Chemcoms who hijacked a Black Sea ferry and threatened to blow it up agreed in principle to end the crisis peacefully. Pages 1, 12, 13, 19

Petrol price war

Shell followed Esso's price cuts by taking up to 4.4p a litre off its prices at all 2,000 of its garages, starting a discount war between Britain's largest petrol retailers. Page 1

Virgin challenge

Virgin Television launched a legal challenge against the Independent Television Commission's decision to award the fifth channel licence to Channel 5 Broadcasting (CSB). Page 5

TV sports levy

A former Tory sports minister called for a £5 "sports levy" to be added to the TV licence fee to counter competition from satellite broadcasters. Page 6

Church's direct line to Heaven

David Wills, vicar of Mossley Hill in Liverpool, wants to use his church as an aerial for a mobile telephone company. Parishioners are appalled by the prospect of phone users, who include drug dealers and criminals, routing their calls via the House of God. The company's payment will help towards the £200,000 urgently needed for building work. Page 6

Vasectomy warning

Three judges warned women not to take for granted a lover's assurance that he had had a vasectomy and could not make her pregnant. An Oxford teacher had claimed damages against a pregnancy advice clinic. Page 8

Fewer students

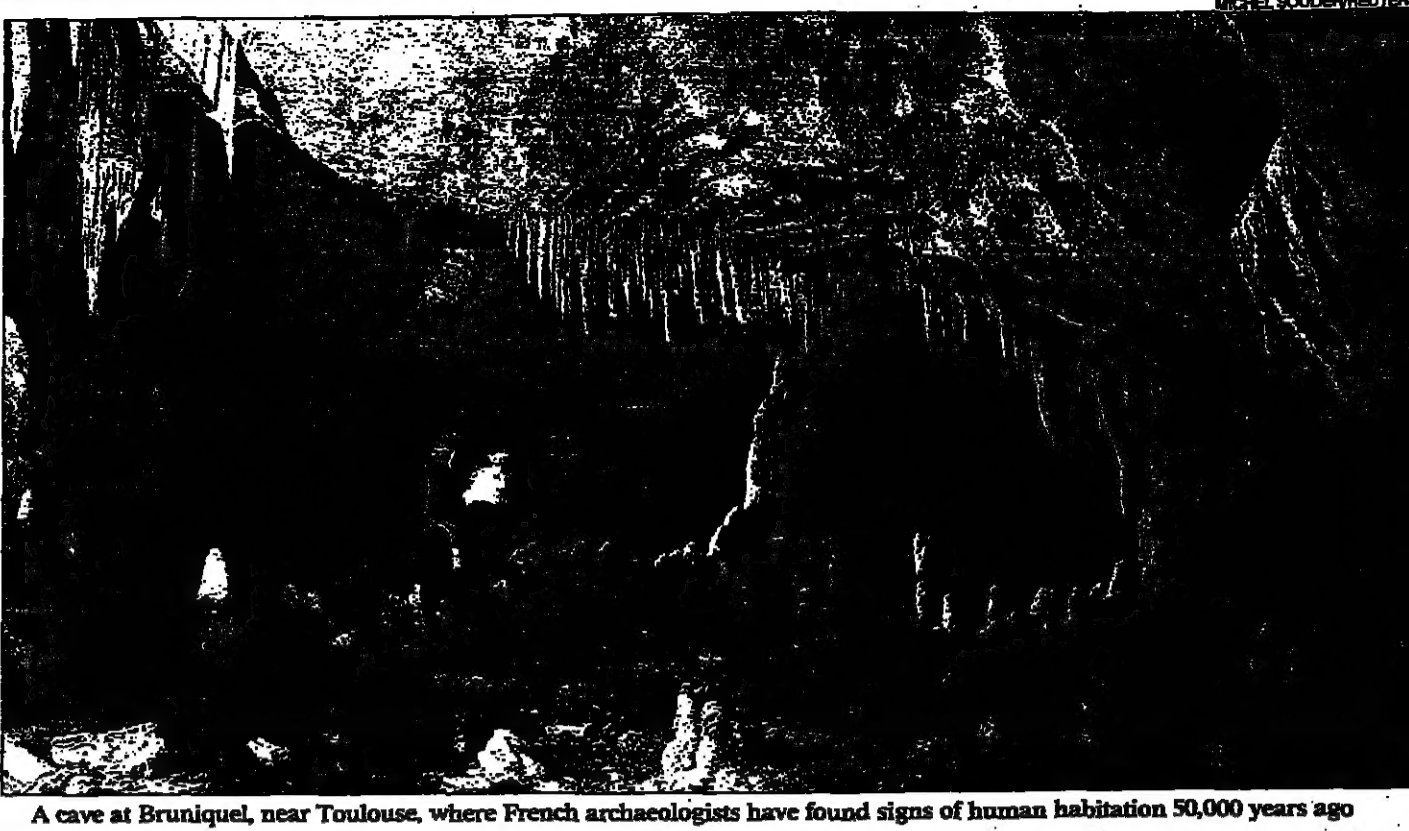
University applications are down by 5,000 this year, the first fall since the Government's big expansion of higher education a decade ago. Page 9

EU man sacked

Bernard Connolly, the British EU official whose attack on monetary union caused a furore last September, was sacked by the Brussels Commission. Page 11

Delhi scandal

The prosecution of seven senior politicians for alleged involvement in a financial scandal has stunned the political establishment in Delhi. Page 14



A cave at Bruniquel, near Toulouse, where French archaeologists have found signs of human habitation 50,000 years ago

BUSINESS

EMU: A European Central Bank is unworkable under current economic and political conditions and should be postponed, says Lord Tugendhat, chairman of Abbey National and a former European Commissioner. Page 25

Gas: Competition to supply gas to 500,000 homes in the south-west of England may have to be delayed because of concerns at British Gas that technical preparations are incomplete, the regulator for the gas industry said. Page 25

Porte: The decisive moment in the battle for Forte comes tomorrow when both Forte and Granada hold their final meeting with Mercury Asset Management, the fund manager with 15 per cent of Forte and a similar Granada stake. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 6.4 points to close at 3704.2. Sterling's trade-weighted index fell from 83.4 to 83.2 after a fall from \$1.5383 to \$1.5295 and from DM2.3419 to DM2.2390. Page 28

SPORT

Football: England will open their qualifying programme for the 1998 World Cup with an away game against Moldova. Scotland start with a visit to Austria. Page 48

Tennis: Tim Henman, Britain's lone survivor in the Australian Open, submitted with a regrettable ease in the second round of the men's singles to Jonas Bjorkman, of Sweden. Page 45

Rugby union: Dean Richards will be on the replacements' bench for England in their opening five nations' championship match against France after the withdrawal of Tim Rodber. Page 42

Racing: Tony McCoy, the rising star among National Hunt jockeys, rode his 100th winner of the season at Nottingham and went on to complete a 22-1 treble. Page 43

Sliding: After the death of the downhill skier Kirsteen McGibbon John Bryant examines the conflicting demands for greater speed on skis and greater safety. Page 46

ARTS

Films of the week: Nicolas Cage drinks himself to oblivion in Mike Figgis's *Leaving Las Vegas*, while Michelle Pfeiffer works miracles on inner-city kids in the rose-tinted *Dangerous Minds*. Page 37

Covent Garden triumph: The Royal Opera's new production of *The Midsummer Marriage* confirms that Michael Tippett's postwar opera is one of the great works of the 20th century. Page 38

Opera move: English National Opera has launched a home for experimental work in east London, in a fresh attempt to nurture new talent. Page 38

Mime high: If you get into the right mood, there is beauty, gravity and wonder in Raimund Hoghe's 90-minute requiem, *Meinwärts*, which is part of the London International Mime Festival. Page 39

Young Arts: Hilary Finch explains how young deaf children are being taught to speak with the aid of music therapy. Page 39

ROYAL IN-LAWS

How the turbulent marriages of Charles and Andrew brought the Queen to the brink of despair. Page 15

Miners' fingers: Dr Thomas Stuttaford on what causes white finger disease. Page 16

Cut back on cut prices: As sales of package holidays slump, tour operators are cutting back on destinations. Pages 22, 23

The fighting in Pervomaiskoye may win Boris Yeltsin support from some Communist and nationalist voters but it seems unlikely to secure his re-election and could undermine whatever hope he may harbour of sustaining reform in a second term as President. — *The New York Times*

Preview: Can a randomly chosen foursome become the new Take That? *Inside Story: A Band Is Born* (BBC1, 10pm). **Review:** Matthew Bond on how Hollywood men try to improve their manhood. Page 47

Sea of troubles

The West must soon ask whether it should still offer such visible support for President Yeltsin, a man floundering in such contradictions. Page 19

Public companies

In the last act of the Granada-Forte soap opera, fund managers should remember they are entrusted with the public's savings, the public confidence in the City and a good deal else besides. Page 19

Seize the time

The best rebuke MPs of all parties can deliver to the Government's limp cowardice over the daylight saving Bill is a large enough presence in the House on Friday to prolong the debate. Page 19

WILLIAM REES-MOGG

Rome at the time of the Emperor Augustus, Venice in the age of Titian, London in the year of Waterloo, New York in the Roaring Twenties must have had Hong Kong's heady feeling of unlimited energy. Page 15

PETER RIDDELL

The Liberal Democrats have survived the Blair phenomenon and could still have an influential role in the next parliament. Page 10

Kaye Webb, publisher, *His Hon Peter Hopkin Morgan, QC*, circuit judge, *Sir Peter Shepherd*, industrialist. Page 21

Prisoners' education; bishops' palaces. Page 19

THE TIMES CROSSWORD CHAMPIONSHIP 1996 QUALIFYING PUZZLE

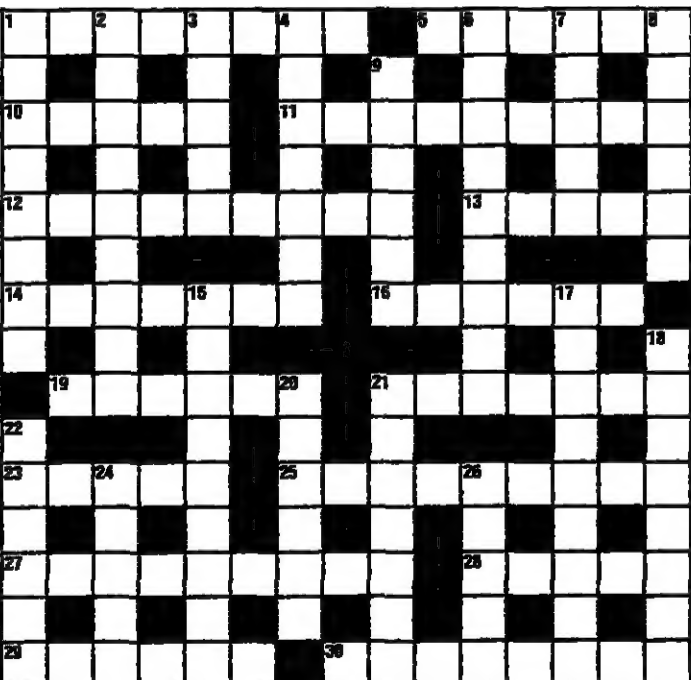
I/We enclose cheque for £6 (individual) or £10 (pair) as the entry fee for the 1996 Times Crossword Championship, with stamped and addressed envelope (9"x4")

NAME(S) (please print)

ADDRESS

VENUE

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,067



ACROSS

- 1 Take off on the breeze here (8).
- 5 Repudiate a bishop by Roman law (6).
- 10 Popular Roman leader ignoring a French political division (5).
- 11 Complete change in the heartless female in volume one (5-4).
- 12 Make arrogant pronouncement about God to artist, without a point (9).
- 13 Like Katisha as daughter-in-law, pick and choose (5).
- 14 Bend the knee in bed (7).
- 16 Fixed peg in seat (6).
- 19 Live at place near Brighton to be fit, in a word (6).
- 21 Runner — one who worries (7).
- 23 Endure a burn (5).
- 25 Hollywood star dancer's finale in can-can (3-3-3).

DOWN

- 2 Strange choice before vital game (3-6).
- 3 Transport route that carries your food, for example (5).
- 9 It's about all there for nourishing drink (6).
- 15 Does any organisation comprehend the point of such a long journey? (8).
- 17 The cure is not a diet, anyway! (8).
- 18 Device for measuring cats and dogs (4-5).
- 20 Sea maiden — is transformed into a Greek character (5).
- 21 Bill is vocal (7).
- 22 He does yeoman service for the meat consumer (9).
- 23 Treatments for American with senility (5).
- 24 No trumps accepted in women's tournaments (6).
- 25 Those who work with nippers (6).
- 26 Very low floor (5-4).
- 27 Being sixteen, wanting to reform church (9).
- 28 Statesman and tale-telling old landowner (8).
- 29 Bath's cry of joy as the water rose (6).
- 30 Sweet young aristocrat contemplated (7).
- 31 Player is too boisterous, to some extent (6).
- 32 Ties the line and serves (5).
- 33 Indians can broadcast within island (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,066

ENSNARED SCHISM
KINGDOM
PIANOFORTE LEAD
A B I T I O N
NASTY BIT OF WORK
S T I L L A
EVIDENT PICTURE
G O E N
TAKEOFF ADDISON
T H I N G
HANGING AROUND
E O S E R R E
TIME HERRING
S I L I N A
ATTEND RAILLERY

Times Two Crossword, page 48

Today we publish the qualifying puzzle for the Times Crossword Championship 1996 in conjunction with Aberlour Pure Single Highland Malt Whisky.

Competition rules

Competitors may qualify by correctly solving and submitting this puzzle, sending the completed puzzle with the entry form, cheque for £6/£10 (see below) and stamped addressed envelope to the Times Crossword Championship (to whom cheques should be made out), 13 Church Lane, Ripon, N. Yorks. HG4 2ES, so that the entry is postmarked not later than January 26. The solution will be published on January 29, and all competitors will be informed of the result not later than February 9.

Separately from the normal competition for individuals there will also be a pairs category this year for the first time. Any two people may qualify as a pair, and will take part in the regional finals on the same basis as individuals, thus: at each regional final the regional winner plus one additional competitor for every 60 or part-60 competitors will qualify for the final from 61-120 competitors, 3 from 121-180 etc. Any enquiries concerning these rules may be addressed to M.C. C. Rich at 01765 614024.

The entry fee for an individual is £6, for a pair £10. Regional finals will be one-day (four puzzle) events as follows: Manchester (25th February), Edinburgh (31st March), Bristol (25th April), London (25th May), Birmingham (7th July). In all cases — note the single day: at London — we hope to avoid an eliminator puzzle, but if necessary this will be published on Thursday, February 22nd. The final will be held at The Hyatt Carlton Tower on Saturday, October 5.

In the event of any dispute the decision of the Crossword Editor of *The Times* will be final. Employees of *The Times* Newspapers Ltd may not compete.

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FORECAST

General: England and Wales will have a dull start with fog in the east and cloud covering high ground in west. During the morning it will brighten up with sunny spells in places, especially North Wales and parts of southern England. Scotland and Northern Ireland will have some rain or drizzle in the north-west but elsewhere it will be cloudy but mainly dry. Eastern parts can expect some sunny intervals but cloud and intermittent drizzle will spread to all parts after dark.

London, SE England, Central S England, Channel Isles: fog clearing, mainly grey but some bright or sunny spells. Wind light south-east. Mild in the bright spells. Max 10C (50F).

E Anglia, E England, NE England: foggy and overcast. Fog lifting but still rather cloudy, occasional bright spells. Mainly dry after dark. Wind light to moderate south. Max 9C (48F).

E Midlands, W Midlands, Central N:

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Abertawe	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Anglesey	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Armagh	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Barrow	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Belfast	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Birmingham	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Bournemouth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Bristol	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Cardiff	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Carlisle	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Colchester	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Cork	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Edinburgh	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Exeter	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Falmouth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Glasgow	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Harrogate	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Hull	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Leeds	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
London	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Liverpool	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Manchester	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Marblehead	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Merseyside	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Monmouth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Newcastle	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Nottingham	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Oldham	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Orkney	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Perth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Reading	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Sheffield	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Southampton	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Stirling	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Stroud	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Sunderland	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Torquay	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Truro	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Weymouth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Wigan	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Windsor	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Worcester	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Wrexham	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10

RECORD

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Abertawe	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Anglesey	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Armagh	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Barrow	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Belfast	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Birmingham	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Bournemouth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Bristol	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Cardiff	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Carlisle	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Colchester	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Cork	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Edinburgh	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Exeter	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Falmouth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Glasgow	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Harrogate	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Hull	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Leeds	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
London	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Liverpool	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Manchester	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Marblehead	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Merseyside	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Monmouth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Newcastle	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Nottingham	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Oldham	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Orkney	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Perth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Reading	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Sheffield	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Southampton	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Stirling	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Stroud	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Sunderland	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Torquay	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Truro	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Weymouth	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Wigan	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Windsor	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Worcester	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10
Wrexham	10.0	10	10	10.0	10	10

AA ROADWATCH


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